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Caste in Space

Caste in Space: The Bahujan Samaj Party and Urban Government in Agra and Ghaziabad, 2007-2013.

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The Bahujan Samaj Party, urban government and caste politics in Agra and Ghaziabad, 2007-2013.

**Caste in Space: The Bahujan Samaj Party and Urban Government in Agra
and Ghaziabad, 2007-2013.**

Ravi Shankar Jayaram, India Institute, King's College London.

01/03/2016.

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Abstract

The electoral success of lower-caste political parties has transformed India's democratic polity over the past two decades. This thesis is the outcome of extensive ethnographic investigations of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), India's most successful Dalit [ex-Untouchable castes] party, in two cities of the country's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh (UP). The BSP commanded a majority of seats in the Uttar Pradesh state legislature between 2007 and 2012. The thesis seeks to investigate how the election of a Dalit-led party affected power relations between elite and subaltern social groups in Agra and Ghaziabad. The BSP state government significantly altered power relations in both cities in three ways. Firstly, the BSP inserted its bureaucratic cadre into key offices of government. Secondly, the BSP state government used its state resources to provide considerable welfare gains to core constituencies, through considerable achievements in housing security. Thirdly, the BSP administration established expansive pro-business regimes in both cities. Elite social groups were allowed to corner patronage benefits within the institutions of the party, whilst the party's middle-class and working-class core voters were compensated with programmatic benefits in the form of police protection, welfare payments, neighbourhood development schemes, and housing security. There is, according to this thesis, considerable convergence between the material interests and the subjective identity perceptions informing caste-based political agency. The political science informing this work derives from the theoretical framework of the "Silent Revolution" (Jaffrelot, 2003). It is based on extensive elite interviews and ethnographic methods.

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Acronyms and Glossary

UP: Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state.

BSP: Bahujan Samaj Party (Party of the Masses)

Bahujan: An ideological term used by the BSP to denote individuals who identify with those castes and communities not included among the ranks of the Hindu upper castes.

OBC: Other Backward Caste, an official category which denotes castes which are neither Dalit nor upper caste.

MBC: Most Backward Caste, an official sub-category which denotes poorer, artisanal castes among the OBC category. Prominent castes include Nishadas (hereditary boatmen) and Kushwahas (market-gardeners and vegetable sellers).

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party)

SP: Samajwadi Party (Socialist Party)

NCR: National Capital Region. The urban agglomeration associated with New Delhi but technically inside the state boundaries of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Includes NOIDA, Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA.

NOIDA: New Okhla Development Authority. A planned industrial township which was conceived by the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru but actually implemented by his grandson, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. NOIDA borders Delhi state, but is actually situated inside the state boundaries of Uttar Pradesh. The city and district, together with Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA, constitute the wealthiest districts in Uttar Pradesh.

GNIDA: Greater New Okhla Development Authority.

Gautam Buddh Nagar/Greater NOIDA: These terms are interchangeable for the administrative division of states into districts.

DA: Development Authority. The single largest landowning agency of the state in any Indian city. Senior management is appointed by political elites at the apex of provincial power in the state capital, Lucknow.

GDA: Ghaziabad Development Authority.

Municipal Corporation: This body controls the majority of land inside its jurisdiction within the city centre. This includes the most valuable urban real estate. The Municipal Corporation is governed by a directly elected mayor, elected ward councillors and an unelected Municipal Commissioner, directly appointed by the state government.

DM: District Magistrate. The most senior administrative officer from the elite Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in the district. They are appointed by the state government. There is only one DM in every district.

SDM: Sub-divisional Magistrate. The administrative officer in charge of a District sub-division (Tehsil). There are usually several SDMs in any given district, depending on the number of administrative sub-divisions. SDMs usually belong to the Provincial Civil Service (PCS).

SP: Superintendent of Police

ASP: Additional Superintendent of Police

IAS: Indian Administrative Service. An elite cadre of Civil Servants who form the apex of the senior Indian bureaucracy. IAS officers are appointed to their posts by elected political elites.

IPS: Indian Police Service. Also an elite cadre of police officers.

PCS: Provincial Civil Service.

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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, Uttar Pradesh (population: circa 200 million) has witnessed the electoral ascendancy of subaltern political parties led by elites from “Backward” castes and Dalit [ex-Untouchable] communities. This has altered the balance of power in a state where upper-caste elites preponderated in the highest political offices since Indian independence in 1947 (Jaffrelot, 2003; Yadav, 2000; Michelutti, 2007). In the period following elections in 1989, the presence of numbers has enabled historically subaltern communities to dominate the helm of state politics. The Samajwadi Party (which represents “Backward” caste elites) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (a Dalit-led party) have alternated as parties of government. In the contemporary period, the two subaltern-led parties have emerged at the forefront of provincial government. Both parties gained unprecedented political success with the BSP winning state elections in 2007, and the SP repeating this feat in 2012. Both took turns to rule Uttar Pradesh through unprecedented legislative majorities in the Westminster-style state legislature in Lucknow.

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is effectively the world’s largest provincial democracy inside the world’s largest democracy. For nearly two decades in Uttar Pradesh, the “second democratic upsurge” (Yadav, 2000) or the “silent revolution” (Jaffrelot, 2003) has brought electoral triumph for political parties representing historically marginalised lower castes (Jaffrelot, 2007, 81). In 2007, The Dalit-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ended nearly two decades of political instability with a legislative majority in the Uttar Pradesh state assembly. The BSP has been in power five times in Uttar Pradesh. However, this was the first time the party was elected to power with a full legislative majority. It was, therefore, able to form the state government on its own and without outside support or coalition partners. Ms. Mayawati, a former school-teacher and a charismatic Dalit politician originally from Ghaziabad district, ascended to the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) in Lucknow.

The BSP won power after accommodating non-Dalits into its party. A Dalit-Bahujan party was effectively transformed into a multi-caste party led by Dalits. The BSP’s tenure in office lasted one full-term. However, in 2012, the party lost power to its principal rival, the Samajwadi Party. An electoral coalition comprising mainly of Backward Castes and Muslims displaced the Dalit party from power, and delivered a comfortable majority of the Samajwadi Party.

This dissertation examines the impact of the BSP as a party of state government through empirical research in two cities in Western Uttar Pradesh (UP), namely in the urban, industrial centres of Agra and Ghaziabad.

In the 2012 state assembly elections, the BSP emerged as the most successful political party in both cities. Agra has a history of Dalit political assertion. The BSP inherited the leadership of Dalit politics in the city and converted this legacy into political success in six out of the nine state assembly constituencies within the Agra urban agglomeration. Under BSP rule, Agra was the site of pro-business policies and policy experiments. This included significant public investments in the leather industry, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs, as they are known – that is, collaborations between the state and private enterprise) in real estate, and the privatisation of the city's electricity distribution network. The BSP government sought to provide Dalits with access to economic activity in the city. Poorer Dalits were also compensated with affordable housing and slum regularisation schemes. Not only did these schemes provide housing security, they also sought to entrench the loyalty of the urban Dalit poor to the BSP state government. In Agra, the city's BSP electoral coalition is held together by Jatav elites who emerged as influential patrons in the early 2000s.

On the other hand, Ghaziabad's political elite consists of the upper-caste intelligentsia and commercial elites. Intermediate-caste elites, who derive wealth and social status as landowners in the National Capital Region, also wield significant political influence in the city. Nonetheless, the Dalit-led BSP emerged as the most successful party in Ghaziabad and the adjacent district of Gautam Buddha Nagar (Greater NOIDA). Through policies facilitating economic growth, the BSP sustained a multi-caste electoral coalition in the city. In Ghaziabad, the BSP's electoral coalition involves power-sharing arrangements between upper castes, Gurjars and Muslim political entrepreneurs. While Jatavs are the senior political patrons in Agra, they play a subordinate role in Ghaziabad and Greater NODIA, where none of the BSP's seven legislators are Dalit.

This dissertation investigates how the BSP state government was compelled to accommodate traditional urban elites while retaining the support of core voters amongst poor urban Dalits. Accordingly, the BSP's used the state apparatus to cultivate its own power networks, which have challenged and eroded the power networks enjoyed by traditional elites. The BSP state government instituted extensive Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), construction of public housing, neighbourhood development and slum regularisation projects. It relied on empowered bureaucratic elites to simultaneously accommodate Dalit interests and direct top-down processes of pro-business urban development. The BSP relied on pro-business policies in order to generate sufficient economic resources required to sustain multi-ethnic electoral coalitions.

The BSP enabled Dalits to access the powerful formal institutions and informal institutions of urban government in Agra and Ghaziabad. It did this through the imposition of authoritarian political control

over the key offices of state. Loyal civil servants were appointed in charge of the senior most offices of urban government. Pro-BSP District Magistrates, Municipal Commissioners, Chief Engineers and Chairs of urban Development Authorities were effectively placed in charge of urban government. These bureaucratic agents asserted the authority of their political principals in Lucknow, namely the BSP Chief Minister and her senior aides. The formal authority of their office was used to displace the informal power networks of established elite social groups associated with the BJP, as well as the power enjoyed by wealthy landowners and commercial actors associated with the previous Samajwadi Party regime.

Political authority in urban Uttar Pradesh is determined by institutionalised, informal arrangements between urban elites and the local bureaucracy. The BSP sought to block informal channels of access to the bureaucracy enjoyed by traditional elites. Instead it sought to use the formal authority of the state to provide preferential treatment to Dalits, historically excluded from urban power networks. Moreover, the BSP sought to construct its own informal power networks based on economic inducements to non-Dalit political patrons and Dalit political actors.

The senior civil servants, working under the direction of political elites based in Lucknow, used their power to award tenders to private parties associated with the BSP. Equally important was their role in awarding licenses, tax breaks, and subsidies in a manner which constructed a pro-business regime in both cities. The civil servants also used their influence over political actors associated with the BSP to ensure employment for Dalits. The civil servants also used influence over the lower bureaucracy to ensure government employment for Dalits, particularly in Agra. The powers of elected urban local bodies and mayors were effectively curtailed, which suppressed the informal power networks of traditional upper-caste elites. These measures achieved significant changes in power relations between Dalit and non-Dalits in both cities. Dalits gained unprecedented access to the state, and its lucrative economic resources.

Nonetheless, it remains important to emphasise the gradual pace of political change, involving co-operation and coalition-building between castes. Elite and non-elite actors, this thesis maintains, are usually closely embedded in economic activity and political action in a manner that belies simplistic notions of class conflict. City-making is a multi-dimensional process. It relies on collaborative, institutionalised arrangements between elected politicians, senior bureaucrats and commercial elites. The BSP's multi-caste urban regimes in both cities clearly demonstrate this.

The research is the product of twelve months of elite interviews, ethnographic immersion, participant observation, and focus groups in Agra and Ghaziabad. It is also the product of supplementary research in New Delhi and Lucknow.

1.1. The Debate: The Second Democratic Upsurge and the limits of Political transformation

The state of UP is the only Indian political unit where a political party representing historically marginalised Dalits, the BSP, has obtained power five times. Ash tosh Varshney (2000) posits the hypothesis that the rise of low-caste politics in North India has the potential to emulate the trajectories of low-caste political assertion which occurred eighty years ago in South India. In South India, the “democratic empowerment of the lower castes was the catalytic agent for the social transformation” (Varshney, 2000, 5). Accordingly, Varshney maintains:

Should the northern outcomes even approximate southern outcomes in the coming years, as would seem likely, both votaries of the liberating potential of democracy and those of reducing inequalities will have much to cheer about (Varshney, 2000: 22).

Other scholars are less sanguine. As plebeian groups gained access to the formal institutions of power, elite groups began to by-pass the electoral arena. They used informal institutions to resist subaltern empowerment, and subverted the implementation of policies which transferred economic resources to subaltern social groups. As Christophe Jaffrelot observes, “the subalterns are taking over but the middle classes have their concerns fixed in other ways, such as by approaching those in office directly and circumventing democratic institutions” (Jaffrelot, 2007, 83). Other authors also point to the increasing tendency of affluent or dominant social groups to deploy personalised connections with the local state in order to insulate their inherited privileges from democratic pressures. Informal, caste-derived networks linking state officials with kinsfolk are an important facet of the local state, especially in Uttar Pradesh.

Craig Jeffrey draws on fieldwork in western Uttar Pradesh to highlight “the mismatch between formal democratic representations and the isolation and exploitation that disadvantaged groups typically experience in their interactions with local state institutions” (Jeffrey, 2000, 1032). These typically arise out of reciprocal networks which provide upper castes and dominant landed castes with privileged access to state officials. The enables preferential treatment and access to scarce economic resources controlled by the state. Such networks remained durable despite two decades of successful lower-caste political assertion.

Elite groups have also deployed political strategies to withstand a threat to their social and economic dominance. Mercantile, professional or intellectual elites are core voters for the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Leela Fernandez and Patrick Heller argue that elites empowered by economic liberalisation but threatened by the rise of lower-caste politics responded with a “politics of reaction, blending market liberalism and political and social illiberalism” (Fernandez and Heller, 2006, 495). The success of lower-caste political parties has been accompanied by the rise of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The right-wing BJP’s ideology aims to overcome caste divisions by emphasising the organic unity of Hindus as a political community. The BJP is led by socially conservative social and economic elites, particularly from the highest Hindu castes. Despite its overtures to lower castes, the party has acted as a vehicle for a re-assertion of upper-caste social power thereby conducting an “elite revolt” (Corbridge and Harriss cited in Jeffrey et al., 2008, 1371).

Even though the BSP and the BJP have governed together in opportunistic political coalitions, BJP governments have worked to reverse the BSP pro-Dalit policies and actions when in power. As Craig Jeffrey argues, “by offering images of Hindu reassertion in the face of the “theft” of resources by “outsiders” the forces of the Hindu Right tapped directly into class frustrations” (Jeffrey, 2012, 38). According to Yogendra Yadav:

It may be an exaggeration to say that the BJP represents the rebellion of the elite, but it is nevertheless true that its rise to political power has been accompanied by the emergence of a new social group that is defined by an overlap of social and economic privileges (1999, 504).

Traditional urban elites and dominant rural elites have found informal networks useful in resisting the encroachment of newly empowered social groups on their privileged monopoly over the networks which control the local state. Urban Uttar Pradesh remains a bastion of the BJP. Agra and Ghaziabad demonstrate the enduring power of the BJP in the state’s major urban centres.

Based on village-level study of political change, Jeffrey et al. (2008) identify a new set of politicised Dalits whose political engagement has “altered local level political dynamics” (2008, 1373). Yet they argue that a “vibrant political movement expressing cultural demands is unlikely to achieve democratisation [...] without a radical shift in the distribution of economic and social opportunities on the ground” (Ibid.). Poorer Dalits in western UP, these scholars argue, are “far from satisfied by piecemeal symbolic gains and feel isolated and disheartened by their exclusion from basic

developmental goods” (Ibid.). The continued socio-economic deprivation of Dalits continues to hinder their empowerment. Wealthier social groups still possess many socio-economic advantages which confers power at the local level, particularly in terms of greater ability to influence the state at the local level (Jeffrey, 2012; Jeffrey et al., 2008; Lieten and Srivastava, 1999; Lerche, 1999).

1.2. Taking the Debate to Urban UP

In UP, the link between urbanisation and Dalit political agency has been documented in the 1960s by an in-depth ethnography of the Jatav leather workers of Agra (Lynch, 1969). Owen Lynch contrasts the landlessness of rural Dalits with the possibilities of mobility offered by the city:

As Cohn (1961) has pointed out, in the village the Chamar’s tie was to his patron (jajman), not to land. Being for the most part landless in the village, the Jatavs easily became an urban proletariat, because they had no roots to anchor them to the rural soil. In the city however, roots have been struck, because many have been able to buy their own land and homes and have become an urban yeomanry (Lynch, 1969, 190).

Caste identity in urban areas is reinforced by occupation and class status. The ritual and sanctimonious dimensions of caste matter less. Instead, it appears that the future of caste lies “not with religion but with the political economy” (Harriss-White, 2003, 190). If the future of caste indeed lies with political economy, then an understanding of the changing political economy of urban India is essential to this research. Ethnographic methods provide the most appropriate tools to uncover the fine-grained social texture of urban society.

The scholarly debate on the effectiveness of the BSP as a vehicle of Dalit emancipation is an important one. The majority of the research which informs this debate is draws on material from rural Uttar Pradesh. This is unsurprising, given the centrality of the rural electorate in Uttar Pradesh as a whole. However, other research on the Dalits has long emphasised the importance of the city as a site of emancipation from the rigidly oppressive social relations of the countryside. As Rajeshwari Deshpande observes:

For the Dalits in India the city thus becomes an emancipatory location and migration to cities as one the key strategies of emancipation. The rural economy imposed strong barriers on the social mobility of Dalits. The urban environment was seen as providing a possibility of breaking these barriers (Deshpande, 2007, 130).

Nonetheless, empirical studies of Dalits in India are overwhelmingly concentrated in rural India. This is understandable to some extent, given that the majority of Dalits remain confined to the countryside (Deshpande, 2007, 130). Yet, even scholarship on rural areas often refers to the importance of opportunities outside the village in mitigating unequal power relations (e.g. Jeffrey et al., 2008; Lerche, 1999; Pai and Singh, 1998).

Moreover, in western UP, the field-site of many of the aforementioned scholars investigating the extent of social change, Chamar labour has shifted from the agrarian sector and into urban and industrial occupations (Guha, 2011, 19). The BSP also has a significant presence in the urban areas of Western UP. Accordingly, there is a need for research into the changing relations of power and dominance and urban areas. There is a dearth of research investigating the relationship between urban migration and political change.

In order to investigate how power relations have shifted in urban UP, it is important to understand how power is structured in Indian cities. This involves interrogating how the structures of urban governance shape the ability of urban residents, from elite and marginalised social groups, to influence decisions affecting their lives and livelihood in the city. Understanding informal interactions are crucial to appreciating the complex ways in which the Indian state is embedded in society (Chatterjee, 2004; Harriss-White, 2003; Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2000).

1.3. The Scope of the Problem

The struggle for the legal right to inhabit the city is a struggle over substantiating the rights of formal citizenship. Kanshi Ram, the founder of the BSP and pioneer of the Dalit movement in North India appears to have recognised this. Like Bhimrao Ambedkar, he recognised the emancipatory power of urbanisation, which allowed poor Dalit migrants to turn their stigmatised caste identity into a resource for collective action (Kanshi Ram cited in Narayan, 2011, 99).

The provision of legal rights of residence to hitherto excluded residents would perhaps bring about a change in power relations. Between 2007 and 2012 the BSP government sought to address the material issues facing the urban poor and new migrants through affordable housing, integrated neighbourhood development schemes and the provision of tenure rights to residents of unauthorised migrant settlements. Analysing how this was done, and their successful implementation is important. It provides a useful means of gauging the extent to which the BSP has brought about a transformation of unequal power relations. It is also especially important to consider the manner in which entrenched established elites sought to resist the state government's encroachment on their inherited patterns of

power and privilege. Citizenship can be viewed as the boundary between the included and excluded (Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zerah, 2011, 9).

The BSP state government, which claims an emancipatory agenda, sought to disenfranchise local government on one hand. On the other hand, the mayors of UP's largest cities, explicitly referred to local democracy as a justification for denying the urban poor legal recognition. Mayawati, the BSP Chief Minister, actively sought to replace elected city mayors with ones appointed by the state government. This measure transferred power in UP over urban centres away from power networks associated with BJP-dominated municipalities. Instead, power was transferred into the hands of District Magistrate's office, the heads of urban Development Authorities (which own public land and holds a monopoly over real estate and commercial development in urban areas), the Municipal Commissioner (in charge of public services, employment and prime urban real estate under the purview of the Municipal Corporation), the Superintendent of Police and other public agencies associated with urban government. These positions were appointed by the Chief Minister, who used the bureaucracy to exert control over urban Uttar Pradesh, in a manner that dissolved urban local democracy.

In UP, the usual fault-lines between state and city governments appear to have become sites of conflict triggered by the Silent Revolution. Accordingly, this research will be motivated by the following overarching question:

How did the election of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a Dalit-led political party, affect power networks in Ghaziabad and Agra between 2007 and 2012?

The power networks in this context refers to the formal and informal institutional arrangements between the relevant representatives of state authority, business and other interest groups, i.e. the leaders of caste associations. These institutional arrangements form the basis of urban government

The overarching thesis question can be best understood in light of two second-order questions.

Firstly, the overarching inquiry seeks to understand the following question:

i) Does political change affect policies?

This thesis will seek to understand political change with regard to the ability of the Dalit-led BSP, a political neophyte representing historically marginalised social groups, to successfully implement social welfare measures for Dalits, who are disproportionately represented amongst the urban poor. In particular, this research will interrogate the extent to which the BSP's affordable housing schemes

and pro-business policies in providing economic security and access to employment for Dalits. It will also examine the extent to which the BSP sought to influence the local state, through the party leadership's control over official appointments in the state civil service. More specifically, this dissertation will focus on the practical implementation of the BSP government's political priorities, and the pivotal role of state officials in ensuring the transfer of resources to marginalised urban communities.

Secondly, the thesis aims to interrogate the extent to which the historical dominance of traditional upper-caste elites over the local state worked to prevent the transfer of economic and non-economic resources to Dalits and other lower-caste communities. Uncovering the durable power of established elites provokes the following second-order question:

ii) Are cities the last bastions of upper-caste elites?

Despite two decades of subaltern political assertion, the municipal political arena in both Agra and Ghaziabad remains in the hands of the political associates of mercantile elites. Nonetheless, the subaltern-led Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party have succeeded in undermining the power of traditional elites by deliberately incapacitating municipal government in both urban agglomerations. While the SP has deployed informal power networks controlled by Yadav political patrons (Michelutti, 2007), the BSP has preferred to rely on the centralised state apparatus to undermine civic government controlled by traditional elites. Consequently, this research seeks an in-depth understanding of the contours of political competition and electoral alliances in urban Agra and Ghaziabad.

As Sherrill Strohschein maintains, "detailed local research at the micro-level into city politics...provide a number of insights into ethnic politics that tend to be missed by studies that focus on macro-level entities such as states and nations" (Strohschein, 2007, 173). Consequently, this research will be guided by a specific focus on the implementation of urban development, policing and affordable housing policies in Agra and Ghaziabad. Both cities are similar in their patterns of political representation.

Through a combination of methods, this research hopes to uncover processes of political and economic change. The research also hopes to uncover the manner in which these changes are shaping the urban form in contemporary Uttar Pradesh. The organisation of public space is intertwined with relations of power and dominance. The shape of public space, therefore, is the outcome of "social negotiations and contest". Politically mobilised social groups are governed by, but also seek to

challenge, relations of power and dominance (Gorringe, 2006, 64). Consequently, this research hopes to uncover the dynamics and outcomes of such contestations for urban residents from the vantage point of historically marginalised social groups, intermediate castes and communities, and their resilient adversaries from elite communities.

An appreciation of caste relations as relations of power rooted in specific regional contexts lies at the heart of research into political action in contemporary India (Tillin, 2011; Jaffrelot, 2003; Gupta, 2005a). As Louise Tillin observes, “state boundaries help to structure political and economic life by determining which groups are in competition with each other for the distribution of resources and which are resources are at stake...” (Tillin, 2011, 3).

The city is not the subject of inquiry as much as it is the location of inquiry. The central focus of this thesis is the manner in which caste *operates as a source of political agency* in urban North India. The historian, Sumit Guha, argues that any effort to, “find a single, unified rationale for the internal workings and external relations of each of thousands of ethnic corporate groups is ultimately futile” (Guha, 2013, 1). Consequently, the validity of research into caste politics must limit the units of analysis to specific urban areas. Any study on ethnic politics must properly appreciate the federal and the municipal jurisdictions which structure power in an urban context.

The city is a prism into the dynamics of political change and the consequences of this change on the structure and form of democratic political institutions. The quotidian institution of caste – its material basis – is rooted in regional and local arrangements. The political scientist, Ashutosh Varshney, observes:

In traditional India, the caste system was a social institution that provided a hierarchical ordering of castes in a geographic area (Varshney, 2011, 1).

Varshney’s terminology may be challenged by academics uncomfortable with the posited dichotomy between traditional and modern. However, this thesis would agree with his crucial point that rural caste order is best understood in terms of a hierarchical ranking system located within a limited geographical area.

The dominant caste in the local area is the community which wields sufficient power to channel, broker, bargain, enforce, and pressurise members of the public and agents of the state in a manner that sufficiently, enthruses effective support from constituents. Or as M.N. Srinivas observed succinctly, “caste mainly exists and functions as a regional system” (Srinivas, 1982, 3). Since urban communities are often spatially segregated, particularistic politics often has strong spatial

connotations. Access to the resources concentrated in the city, especially when linked to struggles for power over the ability to control and alter spatial arrangements, shapes political cleavages. It also shapes inter-caste competition and collaboration in order to gain control over urban government. Public bodies which control lucrative urban real estate remain the most prized objects of political competition.

Given the complexity of this research topic, it becomes important to specify the parameters of this research. This research draws on diverse scholarship on India. The theoretical underpinnings of this research are informed by the following six strands of social science inquiry.

Firstly, the research studies the macro-level interaction between dynamic electoral processes. Access to federal political institutions provide the economic resources and networks to affect the macro-level political context. Political access of this kind provides political agents with the power to alter stable patterns of institutional arrangement between the formal bureaucracy and elected political elites. Chief Ministers, at the apex of state governments, have the most discretion to alter patterns and networks of government through the bureaucracy and the social groups they choose to favour.

The political context of this research, the Bahujan Samaj Party's administration, between in 2007 and 2012, draws on a rich repertoire of understanding provided by urban Regime Theory (Stone, 1989). Urban Regime Theory, which emerged out of the study of urban politics in the United States, focuses on the political economy of urban government. Urban regime theory emphasises the diffuse nature of political power in any democratic urban context. Power is divided between the authority of the state and economic power of business. Consequently, urban regime theory emphasises the extent to which urban government consists of the informal, reciprocal arrangements between the state and business (Stone, 1989). Such institutionalised relationships lie at the heart of urban power and authority. This theoretical framework, with its emphasis on the diffusion of state authority and the informal institutions of urban power, is well-suited to the Indian context.

Secondly, it considers formal and informal institutions at the level of a large urban area. Urban local government and informal social networks ensure sufficient levels of trust and reduced transaction costs. These are the key preconditions for economic exchange (North, 1991; Granovetter, 1985). It also relies on a sophisticated understanding of the nascent discipline of political geography (Tillin, 2011).

Thirdly, this research draws from existing historiographies of the institutional arrangements pertaining to the specific context of this research. It draws on scholarship on the associational arrangements and caste institutions of established communities of Hindu and Jain merchants.

Elite groups control the most lucrative forms of economic activity across North India. Established merchant communities developed networks of reciprocity governed by philanthropy, credit networks, trade guilds and religious organisations which underpinned the strategic influence of economic elites over civic government across urban North India (Bayly, 1989). Commercial elites effectively established control over urban local government, to the extent that Christopher Bayly described the North Indian commercial centres as Hindu Corporate Towns (Bayly, 1989), (Gooptu, 2001), (Guha, 2013). These institutions and commercial networks persist to this day, and are central sources of economic activity, upper-caste political agency and conservative resistance to the political assertions of subaltern political parties. The legacy of these institutional arrangements is demonstrated by contemporary elite dominance over municipal government in urban Uttar Pradesh.

This work is also inspired by Owen Lynch's ethnographic inquiry into political mobilisation and the leather industry in Agra. Lynch's work is a pioneering study of the intersection between economic activity, identity politics and democratic political institutions (Lynch, 1969). Sudha Pai (2002; 2009; 2014) matches the pioneering scholarship of Owen Lynch (1969) as she reveals the extent to which Dalit politics is embedded in broader regional economic dynamics. This intersection between political assertion, economic change and urbanisation is also made explicit by Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar (Pai and Kumar, 2014). Their analysis of the intersection between corporate economic activity, the political economy of urban development and caste identity under the Bahujan Samaj Party is unparalleled.

Fourthly, urban areas are disproportionately important as sites of rent-seeking by political parties. These relate to the importance of cities in sustaining social networks, commercial interests and material necessary for political viability. These become significant when we consider the ability of a political party's ability to utilise institutions according to the concept of urban machine politics elaborated by James Scott (1969). Urban governing arrangements have their origins in clientelistic structures of government and are governed by well-connected political patrons who enjoy political legitimacy accorded to them by their followers and kinsfolk. These provided the bonds of loyalty and trust that enable the creation of patronage networks of elected politicians, commercial elites and the local bureaucratic elites. Such power networks exist contingent on their ability to control access to the state and their ability to pass on economic and non-economic benefits to their followers (Chandra,

2004). Fifthly, this thesis relies on a historical analysis of institutions governing political patronage, philanthropy and social welfare to the urban poor (Bayly, 1989) (Chandra, 2004). Finally, this thesis is concerned with a political grouping's ideological legitimacy vis-à-vis core social groups, as well as potential auxiliary and floating electoral constituencies (Guha, 2011).

The dissertation is the outcome of fieldwork in the two urban agglomerations of Agra and Ghaziabad, both of which are located in the Western Region of Uttar Pradesh. The BSP dominates both cities through representation in the state-legislative assembly even as the BJP controls the office of the mayor and the municipal corporation of both cities. The two cities are different with regards the socio-economic position of Dalits. Agra's leather industry has provided many Dalits a measure of relative prosperity, which has endowed the city with a long history of Dalit political assertion (Lynch, 1969). Ghaziabad, on the other hand, has been described as a city dominated by the upper castes, particularly the *Bania* or trader community (Dash, 2012, 1). Ghaziabad is an elite dominated city whose political economy intersects considerably with economic activity centred on Delhi, and the National Capital Region which expands well into the provincial political boundaries of Uttar Pradesh. Agra, on the other hand, is a city where the distribution of power is more diffuse, as the city's Dalit economic elites have gained economic independence and political power through the self-conscious identity assertion of Dalit Buddhist intellectuals, civil servants, and factory owners who still rely on the electoral support of the skilled Dalit working-class and lower middle-classes, many of whom are also associated with the leather industry.

This research gathered data through a combination of elite interviews and ethnographic studies of specific neighbourhoods. The evidence for this thesis was drawn out of one year of elite interviews, participant observation, focus groups, and partial ethnographic immersion into the homes and workplaces of elite, middle-and working-class Banias, Brahmins, Dalits, Yadavs, Rajputs, Gurjars and Muslims in Agra, Ghaziabad, Lucknow and New Delhi. The data gathered in Agra and Ghaziabad forms the key prism of this ethnographic foray into political science. Elite interviews are essential for understanding political processes and power relations at the city level. Ethnographic field-work is the best way to "...capture the lived relations and meanings that are constitutive of the everyday reality of the marginal city-dweller" (Wacquant cited in Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2012, 13).

1.4. What is to come: The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five distinct body chapters. The second chapter is a review of existing scholarship on caste identity in contemporary urban India. This chapter reviews the literature on the social construction of caste identity. Based on an in-depth study of previous academic literature, this chapter argues that caste has emerged as a secular institution governing collective action and economic exchange in urban India. There is a specific emphasis on the role of caste-based collective action and the social bases of political mobilisation amongst urban Dalit communities. Urban planning is projected as a technocratic and managerial exercise (Anjaria, 2006; Kennedy and Zerah, 2008). Yet in reality, urban policymaking appears to be determined by informal networks of political, administrative and commercial elites (Roy, 2008; Anjaria, 2006; Chatterjee, 2003). In order to reconcile the subjective identity perceptions, which constitute the building blocks of caste solidarity with material political economy, this thesis will borrow from Mark Granovetter. This approach argues that human behaviour and institutions are “constrained by on-going social relations that to construe them as independent is a grievous misunderstanding” (Granovetter, 1985, 482). This work is concerned with understanding shifts in relations of power; it will limit itself to the political relevance of caste identity. The group identity and associational ties produced by caste identity remains the most crucial building block for collective action in urban India. As the doyen among Indian political scientists, Rajni Kothari, observed, the twentieth century ensured a shift in the “context and level of political operation” of caste as a salient category of political mobilisation (Kothari, 1970, 7).

Urban planning regimes and the policies of urbanisation in the post-liberalisation period have entailed a shift towards the promotion of cities, particularly large cities, as engines of economic growth. This converges with state governments’ emphasis on pro-business regimes as expressing the political priorities of the provincial state (Kohli, 2009). In the contemporary period, the Indian state has instituted top-down public agencies whose chiefs are appointed in state capitals. These autonomous bodies, known as Development Authorities, control the majority of urban land. Development Authorities work closely with other centrally-directed public offices, including the District Magistrate and the Municipal Commissioner so as to facilitate the economic interests of commercial elites. Public Private Partnerships involved in the construction of infrastructure projects and real-estate investments are coordinated by the highest officials in urban Development Authorities. The BSP ensured the stability of these power relations. The BSP contributed to these political processes with a pro-corporate government.

The third chapter in this thesis focuses on the grass-roots processes which have enabled the BSP to obtain political dominance in Agra, a city where Dalit assertion pre-dates the BSP as the Ambedkarite political party. In Agra, the party's ability to cement a winning electoral coalition depended on a major demographic shift. The Jatav Dalits of Western Uttar Pradesh (UP) shifted off the land and into urban areas. In Agra, the Jatav exodus to the city followed caste violence and massacres in the surrounding districts of Western UP, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh between 1990 and 1992. This time-period marks a critical turning point that established the city as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) bastion thereby displacing the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The legacy of these processes of political contestation has important ramifications for the BSP's approach to public investments in urban redevelopment and affordable housing.

In this chapter, I argue that the BSP's affordable housing policies draw on historical repertoires of the urban Dalit neighbourhood as the site of political agency. The Dalit neighbourhood forms the crucible of social emancipation through political consciousness and protest. Dalit political assertion is centred on a rights-based approach to poverty reduction. Kanshi Ram reconceived poor citizens as disempowered subjects with no option but to engage in politics to claim their basic rights (Pai, 2002). In post-independent India civic rights are seldom obtained on an inalienable basis. They are acquired solely on the basis of political contingency. The construction of the Dalit neighbourhood forms the social and economic basis for urban politics in the city. Moreover, these policies demonstrate the extent to which the BSP as a political party has a keen understanding of the material demands of its core constituency in the context of Western Uttar Pradesh.

The fourth chapter delves into the mechanisms through which the BSP state government sought to institute pro-business regimes in Ghaziabad and Agra. The central issues discussed in this chapter relate to the "state's goals and capacities, expressed in the institutionalised relationship between the state and the private sector" (Kohli, 2009, 149). Despite the resistance of local elites documented in the previous chapter, the BSP has been able to make significant interventions in the local political economy. This was particularly the case in Ghaziabad where the expanded resource base provided the material base for multi-ethnic networks of brokers and clients which undermined the power of established political machines.

The BSP attempted similar interventions in Agra, especially in the energy and leather industries. The state government prioritised public interventions through major giveaways to big business houses. They cornered lucrative public resources including land. In Agra the state government privatised the city's electricity distribution network. In the National Capital Region, an entire six-lane Expressway

was constructed by a private company which acquired farmland for real estate in six districts through eminent domain. In both cities, there was also an emphasis on ensuring that a portion of resources were channelled towards the Dalits, particularly the Jatavs.

In Agra, there was a greater emphasis on public investment and transferring public resources in aid of Dalit business. This was most significantly demonstrated by tax breaks, exemptions and loans to the Taj city's Jatav-dominated leather industry, as well as the establishment of a shoe wholesale centre that sought to undercut the "Bania" monopoly over the distribution networks in the leather industry.

Elite and intermediate caste contractors who were awarded government contracts for infrastructure and housing projects were also expected to hire Jatav labour and subcontractors. This was possible in Agra, because the local Jatav community enjoys a unique position of power. There exists a sufficiently prosperous Jatav elite that is in a position to provide patronage to poorer Dalits. In Ghaziabad, by contrast, the BSP succeeded in co-opting patrons from local elite groups – who were then able to provide patronage to Dalits. In Ghaziabad, the BSP was also able to leverage its pro-business agenda by using an expanded resource base to sustain an overarching multi-ethnic electoral coalition. This was also the case in the adjacent peri-urban district of Gautam Buddh Nagar (Greater NOIDA).

The fifth chapter explores the intersection between Uttar Pradesh's state politics and economic activity in Ghaziabad. The city is located in India's National Capital Region (NCR) and is adjacent to Delhi. This chapter uncovers the mechanisms through which the BSP accommodated the Gurjar intermediate classes into its pro-business governing arrangements in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region. The Dalit-led party of government relied on Gurjar patrons to ensure that the material proceeds of growth would directly benefit socially disadvantaged Dalit working classes. The BSP had to rely upon some urban elite group to advance its political and financial interests. It reached out to affluent Gurjars because the social and economic interests of this community coincided most neatly with that of the BSP.

The ability of intermediate classes to embed themselves in positions of power and authority through strategic connections lie at the heart of what Harriss-White describes as Intermediate Regimes. I argue that Michael Kalecki (1972) and Barbara Harriss-White (2003) postulate the most appropriate models in order for us to understand dynamic processes through which commercial interest and caste identity coincide (Harriss-White, 2003, 50). The economic interests of intermediate classes diverge from wealthy urban elites as much as they do from rural labour and poor urban migrants. Scholars

interested in the intersection between economic activity and caste-based political action must pay careful attention to the role of intermediate classes and castes, who are the prime architects of “Intermediate Regimes” (Barbara Harriss-White, 2006, 50).

Intermediate classes of wealthy farmers, and independent business communities remain a class apart from urban elites associated with the corporate economy. They are also considerably socially distant from the urban working class and lower middle class. Gurjar commercial and political entrepreneurs represent an intermediate class in the National Capital Region. An alliance between prominent Gurjar business houses, political entrepreneurs and the Dalit-led BSP underpinned the formation of an intermediate regime, established under the patronage of the BSP once the Dalit party assumed power in 2007.

The sixth chapter concerns the manner in which political regimes make use of the state’s monopoly on violence for their own political interests. The chapter emphasises the contrast between the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party with regard to the manner in which their leaders seek to exert their authority over the state bureaucracy. It does so through an analysis of policing in urban Uttar Pradesh. There has been a serious deterioration in relations between the police and the urban poor since the BSP left office.

The power of the police over the lives of the poor is particularly significant. The police are the most visible and most frequent agents of the state. As the majority of Indians work outside the formal economy their business and livelihoods is outside the formal regulatory framework of the state. Ethnography provides important insights into how the police operate under two difference regimes. The manner in which the police are controlled by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) in Uttar Pradesh reflects their divergent political priorities. It also provides an important and clearly visible glimpse into how state-level political elites seek to control utilise the state’s monopoly through informal channels. It appears that the structure of a political party, as well its political priorities plays an important role in determining how it governs.

The Bahujan Samaj Party’s (BSP) emphasis on the centralisation of bureaucratic chain of command resulted in a significant substantive difference from the SP’s decentralised approach to policing. This is because “dominance is characterised by power of command [whereas] political power is characterised by the state’s monopoly over the legitimate use of force” (Frankel and Rao, 1989, 41). The BSP’s intelligent use of the police force, and the central state as bulwark against the dominance and violence of locally powerful castes secured fundamental civic rights for the diverse urban

communities of Agra and Ghaziabad. The BSP's urban regime relied on the careful stewardship of bureaucratic elites placed at the helm of the urban bureaucracy in Agra, Ghaziabad, Greater Noida, NOIDA, and the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA). These worked to suppress local power networks which may have sought place road blocks to the state government's pro-corporate policies. This was particularly visible in the state governments' urban regimes and Public Private Partnerships in both Agra and the National Capital Region. Aside from an empowered bureaucracy, the BSP also accommodated intermediate elites from patrons from the Jat, Jatav and Gurjar communities. These political patrons were central in providing direct representation to the interests of intermediate classes affected by economic change. By winning these patrons over, the BSP was able to ensure minimal disruption to the commercially lucrative real estate projects associated with the Yamuna Expressway. The Dalit party's shift away from state socialism and the political interests of Dalits and Backward Castes towards pro-market policies and an emphasis on inter-caste collaboration is a testimony the enduring power of centrifugal forces of Indian democracy.

1.5. Statist Bonarpartism against an umbrella coalition of factions: Comparing the internal political structures of the BSP and the SP in Uttar Pradesh

The Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party are vertically divided between senior elites based in Lucknow and district- and city-level political elites.

The two parties are horizontally divided between elected office-bearers and unelected, yet influential political leaders and party bosses. Office-bearers are either affluent businessmen or they are educated, middle-class community leaders.¹²

The two political parties at the forefront of contemporary state politics in Uttar Pradesh differ significantly with regard to their internal organisational hierarchies and the manner in which local urban political units are controlled by the senior state-level party leadership.

¹ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, Aaj News Bureau, Agra, 18th April, 2013.

² Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Gokuldharm Farm, Bambrauli Aheer, Agra, 21st November, 2013.

~~Both parties are horizontally divided between elected office bearers and unelected, yet influential political leaders and party bosses. Office bearers are either affluent businessmen or they are educated, middle-class community leaders.~~

The BSP's volunteer cadre are primarily from educated, lower middle-class Dalit backgrounds. Educated Dalit volunteers often lack the money or family connections necessary to secure government jobs (Jeffrey et al, 2008). Educated Dalits who could not find regular, formal employment were among the most dedicated party activists (Jeffrey et al., 2008). They had the time and the energy to devote themselves to party work, a luxury unavaibale to their working-class kinsfolk.

The BSP continues to rely on its grassroots party cadre to mobilise ideological commitment among working-class Dalits. Christophe Jaffrelot documents this elegantly:

The Bahujan Samaj Party (the party of the masses), which was founded in 1984 by a militant Ambedkarite, Kanshi Ram... has emerged as a full-fledged Dalit party, largely because it was in a position to cash in on the development of a Dalit counter-culture (including a poignant literature) and programmes of positive discrimination which have given birth to a Dalit middle-class whose dedicated members were keen to organize themselves and their caste fellows.

In its stronghold of Uttar Pradesh, where the BSP could rely on the Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), a movement of mostly Dalit public sector employees that Kanshi Ram had organized from the 1970s onwards, the BSP became the third largest party in 1989. It then benefited from being a coalition partner of the Samajwadi Party at the helm of the government of Uttar Pradesh in 1993-95. In this capacity, it advocated policies intended to promote the interests of the Dalits at large.....Mayawati, the BSP leader, repeated the same strategy when she became chief minister of UP with the support of the BJP in 1996-97 and 2003. Eventually, the BSP won a majority of the seats in the state assembly in 2007 (Jaffrelot, 2012, 1).

The Bahujan Volunteer Force and Dalit political activists organise political rallies, Buddhist ceremonies, and street theatre in order to raise the consciousness of the Dalit masses. Dalit activists also play an important role in agitating on behalf of Dalit victims of atrocities. They seek to hold the

local administration accountable and ensure the police registers complaints of casteism and abuse against poor Dalits. They enjoy the respect of their community because of their ability to withstand bullying and intimidation at the hands of dominant castes in both urban and rural Uttar Pradesh (Bose, 2009).

Once the BSP government obtained power, it rewarded educated, unemployed Dalit youth with government jobs. Successive BSP governments have ensured the fullest implementation of constitutional provisions for affirmative action and positive discrimination in government employment ever to have taken place in independent India (Jaffrelot, 2012; Guha, 2011).

Between 2007 and 2012 the BSP government recruited 88,000 teachers³ and 35,000 police officers⁴ as well as other government employees.⁵⁶ Dalits and OBCs benefitted from quotas which reserved 50% of all government jobs for communities not classed as “General” (i.e Upper castes including Brahmins, Vaisyas, Kayasthas, Rajputs and forward castes).

Additionally, the BSP government legislated for affirmative action in promotions, ensuring existing Dalits state government employees were not discriminated against when it came to promotions⁷⁸.

As a result of the BSP government’s recruitment drives and stringent implementation of affirmative action quotas, large numbers of educated, unemployed Dalit leaders gained employment as school

³ The National Planning Commission details evidence of Health and Education expenditure by the state government between 2008 and 2011/12. Especially pertinent is data relating to “massive recruitment of 88,000 teachers” and improved teacher pupil ratio (p.68). <http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/present/uttarpradesh.pdf>.

⁴ The BSP government also established an arm’s length body the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment Board (UPPRB) to oversee the recruitment into the state police force. In 2009, the Recruitment Board, chaired by Additional Director General of Police, V.C Goel, conducted “the biggest ever induction into the constabulary”. See “Record Application for State Police Recruitment”, *The Indian Express*, September 12, 2009. <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/lucknow/record-application-for-state-police-recruitment/>.

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⁷ “BSP seeks constitutional amendment for SC, ST promotion quota”. *Business Standard*, April, 30th, 2012.

“BSP seeks Constitutional amendment for SC, ST promotion quota”. *Business Standard*, April, 30th, 2012.

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teachers, in the state constabulary and as ancillary service providers in other government departments.

The party leadership rewarded its educated and unemployed cadre with government jobs, while ensuring that the grass-roots cadre is precluded from mounting effective political challenges to the senior leadership. Civil servants are barred from engaging in overtly political activities and therefore pose a limited threat to the senior leadership of the party.

There are economic and non-economic consequences to such measures (see Jaffrelot, 2012). For most Indians, government employment is associated with enhanced social status and prestige in the eyes of their neighbours, kinsfolk and associates. The incorporation of party cadre and educated Dalits into the state apparatus reinforces the top-down statism of the BSP. At the same time, it ensures that Dalit communities have an altered relationship with the state.

The Dalit community in UP, with Jatavs at the forefront, has gained political influence and social dominance associated with education and white-collar employment. As MN Srinivas observed in 1959, this represented a form of social and political caste dominance which was distinct from a caste's numerical preponderance or the sum total material assets owned by castes (Srinivas 1959, 1). MN Srinivas defined as the "Western criteria of dominance" which emerged "from the number of educated persons in a caste and the occupations they peruse" (Srinivas, 1959, 1). This criteria was defined as Western because it derived from access to Western and non-traditional education and white-collar employment. It stands in contrast to the ritual hierarchy of caste, which is based on scriptural and liturgical knowledge as well as feudal authority based on landownership. Indian citizens are keenly aware of this form of dominance and would like their offspring to be educated and gain white collar employment (Srinivas, 1959, 1).

The BSP ensured the Jatav community gained considerable political influence through gainful employment in the public sector. Lower caste communities were systematically excluded from the local state in post-independent India (Jeffrey, 2000). Consequently, the BSP victory in 2007 represents a major political transformation. The Mayawati administration has reinforced the symbiotic relationship between the BSP as a political party and the Indian state bureaucracy. The BSP retains the political structure and ideological commitment of a statist political party (Pai, 2002).

The BSP's origins in the Backward and Minorities Central Employees Federation (BAMCEF) also reinforces the statist character of the party. Despite internal conflict between BAMCEF members and the party chief Mayawati, the BSP continues to rely on BAMCEF office bearers as policy advisors and political consultants.⁹

There are branches of BAMCEF in every major town and city in Uttar Pradesh. Local BAMCEF cells are run by senior civil servants associated with the Dalit-Bahujan movement. These senior bureaucrats co-ordinate middle-class support for the BSP and provide leadership to working-class Dalits. BAMCEF performs the role of an advocate for Dalit civil servants and as an arms-length body providing support and criticism of the BSP as a political party.¹⁰ Civil servants associated with BAMCEF provide significant patronage and access to social workers, and political activists across Uttar Pradesh.¹¹

Dalit activists and members of the Dalit-Bahujan movement, and the Buddhist counterculture have an ambiguous relationship with the BSP as a political party and as a party of government. When the party is in government, Dalit activists and social workers benefit from increased access to the state bureaucracy. They are able to agitate on behalf of their community and ensure effective response to grievances (Jaoul, 2007; Bose, 2009). This is enabled by the BSP government's emphasis on ensuring the state bureaucracy is responsive to Dalit interests and by the BSP government's policy of placing Scheduled Caste officers in positions of prominence at all levels of the state bureaucracy (Jaoul, 2007).

There is, effectively, a division of political labour between the party and the Dalit counterculture. This is a relationship based on mutual interdependence as well as tension between the ideologically motivated activists and the politically opportunist BSP (Jaoul, 2007; Bose, 2009)

In return, by ensuring access and holding bureaucrats to account, cultural activists and social workers alter perceptions of BSP rule in the eyes of ordinary Dalits. They ensure the party is seen as an effective vehicle for Dalit rights and political assertion. Activists closely embedded within working-class communities enjoy high levels of social esteem, and are most effective when the BSP in power (Bose, 2009; Jaoul, 2007).

⁹ Interview with Sohini Guha, New Delhi, 12th November, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with Sohini Guha, New Delhi, 16th September, 2013.

¹¹ Interview with Malkhan Singh, Agra, 3rd November, 2012.

Dalit social activists remain critical of the rank opportunism of the BSP, especially given the party's penchant for accommodating political entrepreneurs from Upper Castes, Forward Castes and upwardly mobile Muslim communities¹². Newly inducted political entrepreneurs, it is often alleged, are opportunists with little or no commitment to the party's founding ideology of Dalit-Bahujan emancipation. These tensions between non-Dalit political professionals and the party's dedicated Dalit volunteer cadre have had a dampening effect on Dalit commitment to the BSP in the 2009 and 2012 election cycles¹³¹⁴.

According to Dr. Rajkumar, a politics lecturer and an associate of the BSP in Delhi, the 2012 elections witnessed considerable tensions between professional politicians and the BSP's dedicated volunteer cadre¹⁵. Dalit volunteers, Rajkumar argues, were put off by the professional politicians who sought to control the booth and ward-level committees of the party.

Consequently, turnout and enthusiasm for the party was seriously dampened with adverse consequences for the party's electoral fortunes¹⁶. Similarly, Ram Kumar, a Dalit writer, playwright and political activist highlighted the anger felt by veteran BAMCEF cadre and senior bureaucrats at the alleged opportunism and venality of non-Dalit politicians inducted into the BSP between 2007 and 2012¹⁷. According to Ram Kumar:

“Senior bureaucrats associated with the state government, secretaries to the state cabinet, approached me in government offices and complained, ‘these ministers are stealing money from our own people’, even when the BSP is in power, exploitation of Dalits continues”¹⁸.

Mr Kumar's account also indicates the importance of the Dalit counterculture and activist base in mediating across different sections of the party. Dalit counterculture enjoys political legitimacy which derives from its activists' proximity with ordinary Dalit communities. Senior political leaders and civil servants associated with the BSP and BAMCEF, on the other hand, are insulated and distant from working-class Dalit communities¹⁹.

¹² Interview with Arjun Savedia, Agra, 25th November, 2012.

¹³ Interview with Ram Kumar, Lucknow, 7th January, 2013.

¹⁴ Focus group with educated Dalit officers, Agra, 21st August, 2013.

¹⁵ Interview with Dr. Rajkumar, Dayal Singh College, New Delhi, 6th November, 2012.

¹⁶ Interview with Dr. Rajkumar, Dayal Singh College, New Delhi, 6th November, 2012.

¹⁷ Interview with Malkhan Singh, former President of BAMCEF, Agra, 3rd December, 2012.

¹⁸ Interview with Ram Kumar, Lucknow, 7th January, 2013.

¹⁹ Interview with Shailesh Singh, Police Officer and BAMCEF member, Agra, 25th March, 2013.

Consequently, the bridging function performed by Dalit civil society activists remains vital to maintaining linkages between the party elite, the bureaucracy and ordinary Dalit voters. Additionally, the BSP also has a distinct and intricate party hierarchy co-ordinated by the central party leadership in Lucknow. The elected office bearers and unelected, appointed office-bearers are kept at one remove from each other by the authoritarian party president Mayawati and her aides²⁰.

The party is divided into districts and each district branch of the party is chaired by a district co-ordinator. There are over 70 district co-ordinators across the state. Co-ordinators preside over district level committees in each district and are directly appointed by the Chief Minister²¹. The district co-ordinators are responsible for managing party coffers, and mobilising voters through get-out-the-vote operations during national, state assembly, municipal, district and village-level elections. Appointments for elected candidates for the offices of Member of Parliament, member of the legislative assembly are made by the party leader herself²².

The majority of candidates for the state assembly and national parliament are not Dalit but instead from Upper Castes, Forward Castes, and OBC and Muslim communities²³. This enables the BSP to ensure non-Dalit voters also vote for the party's candidates even as the party takes the Dalit vote for granted in Uttar Pradesh. Zonal coordinators are responsible for selecting candidates for municipal, district and village council elections²⁴.

The BSP relies on Mayawati and her closest aides to rise above the various factions of the party. There remains a sharp divide between the Dalit social movement, the grass-roots party cadre, the BAMCEF civil servants and the Upper Caste bureaucrats and lobbyists and the former ministers, MPs, MLAs and Members of the Legislative Council (nominated to the upper house of the state legislature), professional politicians and elected office bearers who constitute the political coalition that is BSP²⁵. This is, effectively divided between the party's Dalit ideological vanguard and the newly inducted non-Dalit professional politicians and lobbyists²⁶.

To some extent, the BSP party leader has deliberately brought about this situation, as veteran BAMCEF activists associated with the party's founder have been deliberately hounded out of the

²⁰ Interview with Malkhan Singh, former President of BAMCEF, Agra, 3rd December, 2012.

²¹ Interview with Dr. Rajkumar, Dayal Singh College, New Delhi, 6th November, 2012.

²² Interview with Malkhan Singh, Agra, 9th November, 2012.

²³ Interview with Ram Kumar, Lucknow, 7th January, 2013.

²⁴ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Café Coffe Day, Sadar Bazaar, Agra, 4th December, 2012.

²⁵ Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, 11th November, 2012.

²⁶ Interview with Devendra Sharma, Ghaaziabad, 21st November, 2012.

party over the past decade. The party's legislators are also relatively dispensable as they owe their allegiance solely to the party leadership, and not to the local BSP party networks. This also consolidates Mayawati's power over her legislators.²⁷

Moreover, bureaucratic functionaries associated with the state political elite are favoured by the BSP political leadership as they are less willing to exert independent political agency.²⁸ This also helps neutralise serious opposition to the BSP's political leadership from within the party. Nonetheless, the BSP maintains a culture of criticism of the party even if the actual leadership of the party is top-down, centralised and authoritarian.²⁹

The Samajwadi Party has a markedly different party structure as compared to the BSP. Mulayam Singh Yadav and his family dominate the party's leadership along with Azam Khan who serves as the de facto leader of the party's 116 Muslim legislators (more than half the party's total strength in the current UP state assembly).³⁰

The senior party leadership relies on powerful regional barons from the party who control their own private fiefdoms based in their local areas. Unlike the BSP, Samajwadi Party's district-level leadership enjoys considerable autonomy from the state-level leadership³¹. Moreover, Yadavs remain at the apex of the SP's political hierarchy followed by Muslims. Mulayam Singh Yadav and Akhilesh rely on powerful regional barons to provide political patronage and raise economic resources for the party.³²

The Samajwadi Party also draws support from other landowning communities such as Rajputs, Gurjars and Jaats in Western Uttar Pradesh.³³ The party has inherited the powerful legacy of the AJGAR (Ahir Jaat Gurjar and Rajput) political coalition pioneered by Jat politician Charan Singh (Jaffrelot, 2003; Brass, 2011). Aspirational farmers used politics as their vehicle to supplant the traditional feudal landowners, and the Samajwadi Party emerged as the foremost vehicle for their political interest in the early 1990s.

²⁷ Interview with Arju Savedia, Agra, 10th January, 2013.

²⁸ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Agra, 12th January, 2013.

²⁹ Interview with Malkhan Singh, former BAMCEF president Agra chapter, Agra, 1st December 2012.

³⁰ Interview with Akram Shaikh, Agra, 26th November, 2012.

³¹ Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, 25th November, 2012.

³² Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, 25th November, 2012.

³³ Interview with Deep Singh Yadav, son of Samajwadi Party District Council President (Firozabad District), Café Coffee Day, Sadar Bazaar, Agra, 21st August, 2013.

In 2012, the SP revived its appeal amongst Muslims through the promise of affirmative action and positive discrimination for Muslims in public sector employment. Muslims do not benefit from quotas which the exception of those Muslims communities placed on the Other Backward Caste list (Jaffrelot, 2003). Consequently, a large proportion of Muslim voters flocked to the Samajwadi Party in 2012, lured by the promise of affirmative action legislation proportionate to the state's Muslim population. As Mukul Kesavan observed in the *The Telegraph*:

What the promise [of affirmative action for Muslim] tells us about politics today is that the notion of reservation for Muslims, which used to be the third rail in Indian politics, the one you never touched for fear of being electrocuted, is now electoral currency³⁴.

On the other hand, the Samajwadi Party has very limited appeal amongst the urban middle-classes who are mainly upper caste supporters of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Instead, the Samajwadi Party draws its strength from district elites, Muslim business communities and the middle-peasantry. The party has a direct appeal to Muslims who viewed the party as their saviour in the wake of Hindu nationalist consolidation in the early 1990s.³⁵

The Samajwadi Party's strongmen provided protection and accommodated upwardly mobile Muslim leaders in the early 1990s.³⁶ The plebeian style of the party, which combined toughness with patronage appealed to the insecurities of poor Muslims (Hansen, 2000). However, since the party's impressive electoral victory in 2012, the party has witnessed significant tensions between the Yadav and Muslim factions within the party.³⁷

At the same time, the Samajwadi Party functions as an open, competitive party with considerable internal competition within the various factions of the party. The senior party leadership relies on an extensive network of district-level "Big Men" who mediate on behalf of the party leadership with the rank and file.³⁸

³⁴ Mukul Kesavan. "Lessons of the UP Polls". *The Telegraph*. 8th March, 2012.

³⁵ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, AAJ Newspaper, Agra, 7th April, 2013.

³⁶ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, AAJ Newspaper, Agra, 7th April, 2013.

³⁷ Interview with Bahadur Singh Yadav, Café Coffe Day, Agra, 4th December, 2012.

³⁸ Interview with Advocate K Nagar, 6th September, 2013.

These regional barons, or *Chaudharys*, within the Samajwadi Party are invariably landowners, including both hereditary landlords as well as middle-peasants empowered by post-independence land reforms. Yadavs remain at the apex of the party.³⁹

Traditional elites or feudal zamindars from Rajput, Muslim and Jat communities must accept secondary positions within the party hierarchy. Fundamentally, political leaders are valuable to senior party leaders only insofar as they raise sufficiently high levels of revenue for the party coffers. This appears to be true of every effective political party in Uttar Pradesh.⁴⁰

Caste identity and the hierarchical structuring of caste groups are effectively undermined by new money and new forms of economic activity. Consequently, Ram Sakal Gurjar and Ramadhir Singh Jatav are valued members of the SP power network in Agra alongside Maharaja Aridaman Singh, a Rajput. Similarly, DP Yadav and Seema Upadhaya, a Brahmin, are important members of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the National Capital Region based on their ability to raise revenues for the party. Personal wealth and social capital outweighs ritual identity to some extent with regard to political activity.^{41,42}

The Samajwadi Party leaders are primarily from rural areas with the notable exception of the party's Muslim leaders, who are well-represented in urban areas of UP. While the BSP's leadership and party officers are primarily recruited from the Dalit middle-class civil servants, the Samajwadi Party recruits heavily from the ranks of businessmen and entrepreneurs from affluent farming communities, particularly those involved in the real-estate and transport industries.⁴³

The Samajwadi Party, consequently, relies on powerful local leaders to provide patronage and employment to the rank and file members of the party. Consequently, factionalism and chains of patron client relationships characterise the socially conservative political party.⁴⁴

Yadavs associated with the party observe that Muslims led by Azam Khan from western Uttar Pradesh are benefitting from the party, given that more than half the party's legislators in Lucknow are Muslim. This has led to considerable disaffection within the Yadav-dominated party, and

³⁹ Interview with Mishti Palit, New Delhi, 22nd September, 2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with Deep Singh Yadav, son of Samajwadi Party District Council President (Firzoabad District), Café Coffee Day, Sadar Bazaar, Agra, 21st August, 2013.

⁴¹ Interview with RB Singh Yadav and Ravi Singh Yadav, Agra, 8th April, 2013.

⁴² Interview with Mishti Palit, New Delhi, October 1st, 2013.

⁴³ Interview with Gilles Verniers, New Delhi, September 22nd, 2013.

⁴⁴ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Agra, January 14th, 2013.

indications that sections of the Yadav community shifted allegiances to the BJP in the 2014 general elections.⁴⁵

Moreover, factionalism within the party is prompted by divisions within the larger Yadav dynasty at the head of the party. Akhilesh Yadav is the scion of the dynasty, but he lacks the patriarchal authority enjoyed by his senior uncles including Shivpal Yadav and Ramgopal Yadav.⁴⁶

Moreover, other extremely senior political leaders associated with the party, including Azam Khan from Rampur and Atiq Ahmed from Allahabad, enjoy considerable independence from the directives of Akhilesh Yadav.⁴⁷ Their patronage networks and power networks are independent of control by the chief minister. The party is much less centralised than the BSP and this provides the party with considerable advantages when it comes to mobilising electoral support.⁴⁸

The BSP micro-manages its political operatives in a manner that is not possible with the diffuse and factionalised Samajwadi Party.⁴⁹

Moreover, the independence and affluence of local leaders enable to exert influence over the state bureaucracy in manner that would be impossible for BSP political leaders. This has had adverse consequences for law and order within the state especially as many Samajwadi Party politicians are in charge of running protection rackets (Michelutti, 2008).

The SP effectively seeks to privatise many of the services provided by the state in order for the party's own strongmen to profit from the provision of these services. This includes the allocation of contracts and tenders, employment and physical security. While the BSP politics places the centralised state apparatus and powerful bureaucrats at the core of its administrative apparatus, the Samajwadi Party prefers to empower the shadow state or the "informal economy of the powerful" (Barbara Harriss-White, 2006).

The informal networks patronised by district elites from intermediate castes and classes are not disinterested with regard to the de facto decentralisation and privatisation of the state's services. Patrons from Yadav, Muslim and other intermediate caste communities are able to access the state

⁴⁵ Interview with Bahadur Singh Yadav, Agra, December 4th, 2012.

⁴⁶ Interview with Kuldeep Nagar, Greater NOIDA, August 22nd, 2013.

⁴⁷ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, September 26th, 2013.

⁴⁸ Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, November 6th, 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with Dushyant Maurya, Agra, March 24th, 2013.

through personalised connections with officials.⁵⁰ Consequently, they seek to influence the local bureaucracy through informal mediation with the state, as these informal networks bolsters their prestige as political patrons and enable lucrative economic exchange.⁵¹

For the Bahujan Samaj Party the inverse is true. The party is constituted out of a Dalit middle-class associated with the state bureaucracy and a large Dalit working-class. Additionally, the party made overtures to upper castes who are well-represented in the state bureaucracy (Pai, 2007; 2009).

Consequently, the centralisation of the bureaucratic chain of command and the use of the state bureaucracy to disempower informal networks controlled by dominant castes and district elites serves the interests of the BSP's political constituencies. Poorer voters are systematically excluded from the informal economy of the powerful. Consequently, they may prefer a regularised state rather than one based on a quid-pro-quo basis, contingent on fealty and deference to powerful political strongmen.⁵²

However, the heavy-handed statism of the BSP, which empowered Dalit and Upper Caste bureaucrats may also be alienating to large sections of the electorate, especially as the BSP retains a reputation for systematic, and centralised corruption.⁵³ Consequently, statist solutions may not be a panacea when the empowered bureaucracy remains aloof and distant from the concerns of ordinary citizens.^{54,55}

This situation may also exacerbate class tensions between the Dalit working-class and the educated, middle-class civil service with many upper caste officers holding senior posts.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, a centralised state bureaucracy appears to have been better at ensuring law and order and minimising violence which appears endemic when the Samajwadi Party takes power. Force and violence appear to be a key element in maintaining political influence within this party and appears also to be a product of the factionalism inherent in the party (Michelutti, 2008).

⁵⁰ Interview with Dushyant Nagar and Ranvir Gurjar, Ghaziabad, September 28th, 2013.

⁵¹ Interview with Vikram Gurjar, Hub Realtors, Greater NOIDA, September 18th, 2013.

⁵² Interview with Gavender Kumar, Agra, March 15th, 2013 and Haider Shaikh, Agra, March 26th, 2013 and Arjun Savedia, Agra, April 18th, 2013.

⁵³ Interview with Ram Gopal Mishra, Ghaziabad, 18th September, 2013.

⁵⁴ Interview with Devendra Sharma, Ghaziabad, 5th November, 2012.

⁵⁵ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 15th September, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with Manoj Kumar, Block Development Officer, Agra, 17th September, 2013.

1.6. Research Design and Methodology

The empirical analysis on which this thesis is based derives from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the large urban agglomerations of Agra and the National Capital Region within the state borders of Uttar Pradesh (UP). The National Capital Region (NCR) consists of a cluster of adjacent cities including Ghaziabad, NOIDA and Greater NOIDA within the political borders of UP state.

Fieldwork was conducted over eleven months between early November 2012 and late October 2013. The cities of Agra and Ghaziabad were the primary field sites, while NOIDA and Greater NOIDA were subsidiary locations for the purposes of this research. Additional interviews were conducted in New Delhi and in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh's state capital.

Agra and Ghaziabad were selected as primary field-sites in order to examine the political strategies of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in urban contexts. Unlike NOIDA and Greater NOIDA but like Agra, Ghaziabad possess a municipal corporation. Consequently, it made sense to choose two cities with municipal corporations as primary research locations in order to be able to compare two similar urban political contexts.

Fieldwork was divided roughly equally between the two cities. Ethnographic fieldwork entailed residing in one particular neighbourhood of Agra for over 6 months (see chapter three for an in-depth account of the micro-politics of Dhandupura ward). This neighbourhood in Dhandupura ward became the primary field-site for ethnographic fieldwork in the city.

In Ghaziabad, fieldwork was conducted in the main city centre but also NOIDA and in the peri-urban neighbourhoods of Dadri and Greater NOIDA. Instead of residing in one neighbourhood, I was able to use the office of a property developer in Ghaziabad for ethnographic immersion. I commuted daily by metro from New Delhi. The metro network extends to Dilshad Garden and NOIDA, after which the journey to Ghaziabad involved half an hour by buses run by private operators and those run by the state government's transport authority.

Research also involved considerable travel and journeys to government offices, law courts and other public spaces where political business was conducted. Research also involved ethnographic

immersion and participant observation in informal gatherings in private residential contexts. Semi-structured interviews were the primary means of gathering data. A variety of interview techniques were deployed, including formal interviews, group interviews and informal conversations.

The majority of interviews were semi-structured interviews conducted in Hindi. A minority of interviews were also conducted in English. Interviews were not tape-recorded in order to protect my informants' confidentiality and gain their trust. Instead, notes were taken by hand during the interview. Focus groups were visibly recorded on a dictaphone with the express consent of participants.

Alongside interviews, the research relied on focus groups. There was also considerable data gathered from participant observation in government offices, cultural events and political gatherings in both Agra and Ghaziabad. Interviews were conducted with voters in both cities, and the voter sample included Jatavs, other lower castes, forward castes, upper castes and Muslims. Interviews were also conducted with party workers and political patrons active in neighbourhood, municipal and state politics in both cities.

Party workers associated with the assembly and district unit of the Bahujan Samaj Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress and the Samajwadi Party were interviewed. State government employees interviewed included officials from the Municipal Corporation, Development Authority, Housing and Urban Development Authority as well as school teachers, police officers, block development officers and other state government officials. Moreover, senior civil servants associated with the state government and senior party officials were interviewed in Lucknow, the state capital.

Aside from civil servants and political agents, this research engaged with journalists and academics, whose role in creating and shaping political dialogue as well as making the state legible for ordinary citizens remains a crucial yet overlooked aspect of urban political life. Ethnographic immersion, combined with semi-structured interviews with public officials and political agents in positions of authority, proved to be the most effective data collection method. Ethnographic methods enabled an insight into how political identities were constructed by political entrepreneurs who sought to fuse partisan political loyalties with ethnic identification.

At the same time, given the high degree of informal economic activity in India, ethnographic methods enable an in-depth appreciation of the correlation between caste networks and occupational identity in both Agra and Ghaziabad. The manner in which members of different castes interacted

with each other and the manner in which social activity and economic exchange was regulated through the use of caste and religious boundaries is best observed through ethnographic methods, interviews and participant observation.

The ethnographic approach also ensures an understanding of the subjective beliefs, normative frameworks and deliberate individual actions which shape the fine texture of social relations in the urban Indian contexts. The fine texture of social relations between social groups, and the informal relationships between political actors, business groups and state officials can only be adequately captured through semi-structured interviews and considerable ethnographic immersion.

2. A Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction: Urbanisation and Caste Politics

Contemporary anthropological work on urban Indian society reveals the extent to which the Indian city is both a “product and producer of particularly political alignments, economic sectors and social structures” (De Neve and Donner, 2006, 3). The meanings of space emerge from on-going struggles for access to resources and the particular constellations of social relations in a given geographic setting (Massey in Gorringer, 2006, 64).

This chapter is a review of academic literature. This review considers existing scholarship on politics in urban India, and the political economy processes through which urban social relations are defined. Furthermore, this review is particularly concerned with the secular role performed by caste-based institutions in urban India.

Urbanisation, Dipankar Gupta (2000) argues, has allowed caste patriotism to flourish. Cities enable diverse caste groups to obtain the necessary economic resources and cultural capital for political and cultural mobilisations. Nandini Gooptu maintains that, during the early twentieth century, the construction of new identities and political vocabularies during a time of urban transformation was crucial to the urban poor’s response to changing power relations (Gooptu, 2001, 143). Reinvented identities allowed the urban poor to redefine “their subjectivity as political actors” and reconceptualise “their own capabilities as human agents” (Ibid.).

Similar processes exist in contemporary India. Kaveri Gill argues that the intersection between shared caste identity and a particular urban occupational niche enables political agency amongst urban Dalits in Delhi. Amongst the city's Khatiks, business-owners and political actors used caste as the basis for collective action in the plastic recycling industry. This allowed for collective action that overcame class-stratification. Consequently, the community has been able to withstand elite-driven legislation which sought to outlaw their allegedly "dirty" business (Gill, 2006). The owners of large enterprises, marginal business owners, workers and Congress Party legislators activated their caste identity in order to protect their livelihood. Caste networks provided a section of the urban poor with powerful patrons "through whom they are able to successfully mediate and influence state policy" (Gill, 2006, 140).

Powerful groups can also use similarly structured caste-based networks to exert political influence. These advantages are also reproduced in urban contexts. Informal networks and economic resources allow for easier access to urban education and employment. Craig Jeffrey documents how young men from rich farming families and dominant castes have been able to entrench their middle-class standing in the arena of university politics. Accordingly, they were successful in resisting the threat posed to their dominance by the political mobilisation of Dalits by the BSP (Jeffery, 2008). Caste identity in urban areas is reinforced by occupation and class status. It appears that the future of caste lies "not with religion but with the political economy" (Harriss-White, 2003, 190).

2.2. Structuring Power in Indian Cities: The troubled emergence of municipal governance in UP

In order to investigate how power relations have shifted in urban UP, it's important to understand how power is structured in Indian cities. This involves interrogating how the structures of urban governance shape the ability of urban residents, particularly those belonging to marginalised social groups, to influence decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods. It also requires an appreciation of the extent to which the actual interactions between the Indian state and its citizens deviate from the Weberian ideal-type of the state. Understanding informal interactions are crucial to appreciating the complex ways in which the Indian state is embedded in society (Chatterjee, 2004; Harriss-White, 2003; Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2001).

Governance remains a highly contested concept even as it remains widely used. Nonetheless, Stephanie Tawa Lama-Rewal and Helen Zerah maintain that:

Despite (or because of) its fuzzy nature, the notion of governance appeared uniquely able to capture the complexity (of processes, actors and institutions) that characterise the way big cities are governed today (Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zerah, 2011: 8)

The literature of urban governance in the Indian contexts points to the fragmentation of the institutions responsible for governing cities (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011; Zerah, 2011) as well as the considerable inadequacy of resources provided to urban local bodies given their assigned role in providing basic goods and services like water, electricity or housing (Pethe and Ghodke, 2002). These accounts reflect a broader critique on the manner in which the devolution of power to city governments has been incomplete. State governments lack any serious desire to cede control of strategic resources offered by cities, particularly larger wealth-creating ones (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011; Kennedy and Zerah, 2008).

The ambitions of decentralisation policies implied by the 74th Amendment of the Indian constitution, which stipulates the devolution of powers to elected urban local bodies, have been impeded by state-level politicians and officials. Stephanie Tawa Lama-Rewal observes:

With hindsight it appears that state governments have consistently worked towards containing the potential of the 74th [Constitutional Amendment] in terms of changing the balance of power (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011).

Moreover, the “financial crunch on urban local bodies” remains significant (Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zerah, 2011, 7). Formal government bodies, which are very often responsible for key sectors such as transport, water and electricity, are dominated by unelected officials that may undermine the power of democratically elected municipal politicians (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011, 23). The prevalence of the Commissioner system as the dominant form of municipal regime probably also contributes to weakening of local democracy. In this system, considerable executive power is wielded by the Municipal Commissioner who is unelected and appointed by the state government.

The relative weakness of city-level institutions, particularly those composed of elected representatives – and the confusions about departmental and geographic jurisdictions places major constraints on urban residents’ abilities to assign responsibility for service provision and properly channel their grievances towards the local agents of the state (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011). This is particularly the case for poorer urban residents, who are far more likely to vote in municipal elections than their wealthier counterparts, but who are less able to influence the decision-making processes that directly impact their lives and livelihoods in the city (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011; Mehta, 2010).

Policymakers from the Central government have also underlined the need to strengthen the institutions of city government in relation to their state-level counterparts. However, there appears to be little concerted effort to rationalise the institutions of urban government or to devolve power to the municipal level, even though the latter is mandated by the 74th Amendment of the Indian Constitution. City governments lack the resources and capacity to perform their constitutionally mandated functions (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011; Zerah and Kennedy, 2008). Moreover, as John Harriss has observed, the gradual, and incomplete devolution of power that has occurred under the constitutional auspices of the 74th Amendment, appears to have empowered local elites in urban areas, who possess the resources and political networks in order to dominate local politics (Harriss, 2006).

The everyday reality of the Indian state is not based on the 'Weberian' ideal type of the state. This implies "a goal-oriented, unitary institution discrete from society, with an undisputed sovereignty in its spheres of jurisdiction" and a clear "separation of powers between judiciary, legislature and executive" arms of government (Berenschot, 2011, 79). Urban governance is projected as a technocratic and managerial exercise (Anjaria, 2006; Kennedy and Zerah, 2008). Yet, in practice, urban policy-making appears to be determined by informal networks of political, administrative and commercial elites (Roy, 2009; Anjaria, 2006; Chatterjee, 2003).

Power networks are undergirded by the control of politicians over the bureaucracy. Consequently, the authority of state is fragmented (Hansen, 2005). This makes it hard to see state and society as separate entities, as the boundaries between the two are "blurred" (Gupta, 1995). These boundaries are governed and bridged by local political intermediaries who mediate between citizens, bureaucrats and service providers (Berenschot, 2011, 80).

The role of mediators is so entrenched in the functioning of the state that the local state can be described in terms of a "mediated state" (Ibid.). Other scholars use the term 'porous bureaucracy' (Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2001) or a "shadow state" (Harriss-White, 2003, 72-103). These mediating networks, these scholars argue, should be seen as routine rather than aberrations to the functioning of the state.

Mediators can therefore distort the outcomes of state policies as local interests can "depending on their bargaining power or hold over the bureaucracy, influence the application of legislation" (Berenschot, 2011, 90). These networks have complicated outcomes for the urban poor who are able to gain state resources through such political intermediaries. However, this results in a "somewhat effective, personal and compromised citizenship" that is marked by relations of "patronage, inequality

and money” (Anand, 2011, 209-211). This is a system where poor urban residents rely on political actors to access basic state services. Their dependence on hierarchical patronage channels reinforces the control of political actors who work to influence the local bureaucracy in order to develop control over the distribution of state resources (Berenschot, 2011, 118).

The “mediated state” intersects considerably with identity politics, as India’s majoritarian electoral system allows politicians to win by targeting benefits at key sections of voters rather than offering them on a universal basis. This helps create a political arena in which “politicians can hardly avoid exploiting different cleavages among the electorate” and consequently the “identity politics that both voters and candidates engage in is shaped by the overriding needs of voters to elect politicians who will help them deal with government institutions” (Berenschot, 2011, 159). However, the identity formations that inform cleavages vary considerably across India, as do local-level political dynamics. In Mumbai, where social cleavages are based on a native/outside dichotomy, appeals to the local state involve legitimising claim-making through an idiom of “belonging” to the city. For instance, petitions to the municipal authorities for water connections have to be made in Marathi (Anand, 2011, 202), signalling the success of nativist politics in influencing the local state.

The success of the nativist Shiv Sena party in Mumbai has involved particularistic claims on state employment, local political patronage and government services. This has excluded poor Muslims in a number of ways. For instance, Muslims residents of the Shivaji Nagar slum in Mumbai are denied basic services by the municipal authorities, including running water. Residents also feel the stigmatisation of their area as a Muslim slum “makes it more vulnerable to frequent demolition” (Contractor, 2012, 35). This material exclusion is reinforced by the fact that “most public places such as the post office, police stations, health posts, and health centres are marked with pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses” (Ibid., 38). This serves to underline the gap between “the social worlds of those working for and heading state institutions and Muslims in the city” (Ibid.). Moreover, the political use of identity symbols, as Berenschot observes, is a useful means of targeting voters and establishing the credibility of promises regarding the provision of state resources.

In Ahmedabad, the local BJP has also exploited divisions between Dalits and Muslims and used anti-Muslim violence to emphasise the Hindu identity of Dalits (Berenschot, 2011, 158). As an informant relates to Ward Berenschot, “after the riots, there were elections. At that time, Vankars and Chamars had become Hindu, so they voted for a Hindu” (Ibid.). The BJP candidates were able to use the riot-induced polarisation of identity along Hindu-Muslim lines to promise Dalits protection and state resources based on their identity as Hindus, thereby undermining the salience of caste identity.

Identity politics, Ward Berenschot observes, “can thus be seen as product of citizen’s difficulties in dealing with a mediated state: the identity politics that both voters and candidates engage in is shaped by the overriding needs of voters to elect politicians who will help them deal with government institutions” (Ibid., 159). Given the specific focus of this research, it is important to contextualise an analysis of the mediated state according to the distinct and shifting provincial political dynamics of Uttar Pradesh. Such an analysis will, however, have to begin with an understanding of the interaction between the formal and informal institutions that govern exchange and economic competition between different social groups.

2.3. Uttar Pradesh: Fault-lines within the formal institutions of power

The insights presented in the preceding section indicate the extent to which “the ordinary stuff of democratic politics is about constant tussles of different population groups with the authorities over the distribution of governmental services” (Chatterjee, 2012, 47). India’s democracy has expanded to include representatives of subaltern and elite social groups. The state’s resources have also expanded considerably with economic growth (Mehta, 2010). Consequently, greater sections of society have developed a stake in the “governmental regime and [are] aware of the instruments of electoral democracy as a means to influence that regime” (Chatterjee, 2012, 45). However, as the preceding section also indicates, this “tussle becomes political because many of the demands cannot be conceded within the normal rules of legal and bureaucratic rationality” (Chatterjee, 2012, 47).

Uttar Pradesh’s elite social formations are situated within the broader historical framework of mercantile capitalism of the Gangetic plain. Christopher Bayly (1989) provides the best framework for this analysis. His scholarship offers the best exploration of the informal caste-based institutions of commercial elites in urban North India. These informal institutions retained their autonomy from state authority and survived the political upheaval which followed the decline of the Moghul Empire. These merchant councils and guides established extensive commercial networks across North India and formed the basis of civic government in a number of Hindu Corporate Towns on the Gangetic Plain. Bayly’s scholarship enables a scholarly understanding of the informal institutions which combine an upper-caste identity, social norms centred on religious piety and contemporary institutional bases of economic activity.

This study is situated in urban centres as the key sites of elite control over commerce and the bureaucracy. These patterns of elite reproduction underpin the Hindu Nationalist and elite-dominated BJP’s control over urban local bodies, through the caste associations of intellectual elite and mercantile communities. Once the BSP ascended to political power through assembly elections, it

sought to use the centralised provincial bureaucratic apparatus to disrupt these local elite networks. It did so through intelligent alliances with elite professional groups as well as through the deployment of its elite and Dalit bureaucrats.

The Bahujan Samaj Party has remarkable parallels with Indira Gandhi's Congress government which dominated Indian politics for two decades. Sudipto Kaviraj provides an elegant theoretical elaboration of Mrs. Gandhi's "Bonapartist" or Caesarianist polity (Kaviraj, 2010, 170). This framework, which he borrowed from Gramsci, provides a valid prism to understand the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) under Ms. Mayawati. The role of the state has immediate practical consequences for the core vote of the BSP. The rise of parties representing subaltern political groups has shifted the composition of legislatures and state governments across the country. However, it is the Hindi-speaking states of North India, and Uttar Pradesh in particular, that were the "crucible for the silent revolution in the 1990s" (Ibid.).

The BSP deployed the power and influence of a "caesarist elite who remain dominant over class and group interest when these contending groups are too closely balanced" (Kaviraj, 2010, 172). The party relies on a bureaucratic elite to provide its intellectual vanguard, on lower-middle-class leaders, and on the skilled working classes to provide the party cadre with a grass-roots cadre of activists and community leaders. The party has increasingly accommodated professional politicians and political entrepreneurs responsible for implementing its pro-business political agenda. These are recruited exclusively from elite and wealthy intermediate caste groups with limited exposure to the BSP's ideology.⁵⁷ Consequently, the BSP's Bonapartism matters even more in the contemporary phase as the party leadership is able to rise above the various factions in order to achieve a coordinated division of political labour. Moreover, the party relied on this strategy to gain control over state-directed economic activity and displace informal networks of commercial elites.

The BSP sought to bring the "informal economy of the powerful" (Harriss-White, 2003) under the ambit of the urban bureaucracy. It subordinated it to the apparatus of centralised governmental authority in a manner akin to the Congress central government under Indira Gandhi. This fits the parties' statist ideology that sees a strong centralised state as a bulwark protecting the Bahujan poor, while also ensuring the smooth flow of rents upwards in a manner that reinforces the centralised, authoritarian power structure of the party when in office. Dalits are virtually never ever socially dominant anywhere in UP. They simply cannot be socially dominant even in western UP where the

⁵⁷ Interview with Dr. Rajkumar, Department of Politics, Dayal Singh College, New Delhi, 24th November, 2012.

Jatavs have gone a long way in contesting and greatly reducing their social marginalisation over the past decades. This is even the case in Agra, where the Jatav political elite is now within striking distance of capturing power at the municipal level.

In both cities, the historical importance of the mercantile communities, mainly Vaishyas, Jains and Khattris, cannot be overestimated, and their prevailing preponderance as the key wealth creators matters to this day. Alongside the traditional mercantile elites, the post-Partition period witnessed the emergence of Punjabi businessmen, who are also an important part of the local economic elite. Concomitantly, both cities have an important class of professionals from the upper castes, especially Brahmins and Kayasthas, whose high preponderance in the bureaucracy provides them a critical position as intermediaries. As Kaviraj argues, political and bureaucratic mediators play a crucial role in coalition-building. The bureaucratic apparatus centred on planning, licensing and the allocation of contracts and tenders provides professional political mediators with key “allocative power” (Kaviraj, 2010, 174).

The BSP’s bureaucratic cadre, therefore, performed the dual function of a vested interest and a politically transformative vanguard. The bureaucratic elite was the most capable formation able to challenge the informal order of the powerful in urban Uttar Pradesh. Modernisation theorists like Weber asserted that “modernization necessarily entailed the progressive replacement of informal co-ordination mechanisms with formal ones” (Fukuyama, 2001, 10). Consequently, the BSP has been compelled to leverage the networks of influence cultivated by the party’s middle-class leadership.

As Jaffrelot observes, the success of caste-based political mobilisation depends on a caste’s ability to mobilise an ethnicised caste identity (Jaffrelot, 2012). This enables successful collective action.

The BSP leveraged networks of influence within a bureaucratic sub-elite to create caste-based interest groups. The political commitment of educated state employees accounts for the rapid success of the BSP in the 1980s (Jaffrelot, 2003). These middle-class activists provided the foundations for an ideological commitment to a statist polity. At the same time, the BSP was compelled to cultivate contacts with civil servants from elite backgrounds, in particular with networks of powerful Brahmin, Jat and Rajput insiders. These elite groups are crucial because they provide the political mediation which are preconditions of any electoral coalition (Kaviraj, 2010, 174). These groups, are the ones which enjoyed powers obtained through their coordinating function at the apex of urban bureaucratic hierarchies. As Kaviraj observes, this intellectual and professional class derives influence from their

allocative power or their strategic control over the distribution of state resources (Ibid.). As he observes this provides managerial elites with a direct “interest in the large bureaucratic control over resources” (Ibid.). Consequently,

It is in the interests of nearly every section in the ruling coalition...to have large common funds in the form of state-controlled resources, because they are politically negotiable resources on which a political demand may succeed. (Kaviraj, 2010, 174).

These officials were then instructed to hand over major projects and economic resources to powerful pan-Indian conglomerates.⁵⁸⁵⁹ These undermined the local economic monopolies controlled by local Bania/Jain merchants and their allies in the local bureaucracy.⁶⁰ Instead, the BSP coordinated new economic activity at a trans-regional scale in a manner that allowed to supplant the political networks of the Hindu nationalists. This enabled the BSP to consolidate its political power in its old bastion of Agra and completely erode the BJP’s political power base in the National Capital Region.

These developments led to a degree of centralisation in the region that was never achieved even by the British colonial administration in Uttar Pradesh. Earlier, the region was controlled by a diverse coalition of landed classes, tenant farmers, urban merchants and the local bureaucratic elite. This state-level drive for bureaucratic centralisation enabled the mapping of the vast rural landmass between the major urban centres. The urban centres became effectively vital nodal points for this attempted economic transformation of a predominantly agricultural region to a state-abetted and corporate-sponsored urbanisation. In other words, a Public Private Partnership on a large scale.

Although the BSP government’s tenure was relatively short-lived, this process has become entrenched, despite the resumption of politics as usual under the SP Government. The BSP administration paved the way for the economic transformation through the centralisation of the state administration, and the handing over control to the corporate groups funding this process. The BSP required political acquiescence from upper caste elites. This is because the state’s upper castes continue to remain elite “both in terms of caste and class, reflected in their presence in politics, higher reaches of the bureaucracy, academia and business” (Pai, 2011, 1)

The second democratic upsurge has involved a struggle for access to the state by social groups whose socio-economic marginalisation denied them access to state resources. One consequence of the

⁵⁸ These include the Construction and Infrastructure Conglomerate, JayPrakash Infratech, the Wave Group, Ansals, Paras Infratech and DLF, all of which are registered in New Delhi.

⁵⁹ Interview with Kuldeep Nagar, Greater NOIDA, 25th August, 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with Brij Khandelwal, Agra, 30th November.

political ascendancy of subaltern groups has been to expose fault-lines within the various institutions of the state, between the new political executives and the permanent bureaucracy. For instance, the BSP government's stints in power involved favouring Dalit officials to ensure the implementation of its pro-Dalit policies (Kumar, 2007; Jaoul, 2007; Pai, 2000). This created considerable tension as UP's bureaucracy is dominated by upper castes, who resented favouritism towards Dalits and the climate of fear designed to ensure compliance. At the same time, the permanent executive was often able to stall the implementation of pro-Dalit policies. For instance, Vivek Kumar points a number of incidents across rural UP where the state-appointed District Magistrates who sought to distribute land to landless Dalits were hindered by their subordinates through misinformation about land records. In one instance, members of the lower bureaucracy even instigated upper-caste strikes and protests against land redistribution (Kumar, 2007, 252).

Another major fault-line has emerged between the provincial and the local state. The implementation of the 74th Amendment devolving power to urban local bodies paralleled the rise of low-caste political parties. As Marie-Hélène Zerah observes, these reforms transformed administrative agencies at the city level into political bodies by the "new role of locally elected representatives" (Zerah, 2007, 52). Anil Verma's description of the "noisy, heated and personal" 2000 civic polls – with high levels of voter turnout and campaign expenditure by political parties – illustrates this well (Verma, 2001, 14). The prime beneficiaries of the nascent democratisation of municipal government have been the elite-dominated BJP. Elsewhere in India, it appears that the devolution of powers to the city level has empowered urban elites, who possess the material resources and social networks to most effectively engage in local politics (Tawa Lama-Rewal 2007; Harriss, 2006). Even as the BSP has made considerable political inroads into both cities, they still face concerted elite resistance. Elite-led municipal politics lies at the heart of that resistance.

The same phenomenon appears to be at work in urban UP, where the BJP has dominated control of urban local bodies, especially in the larger cities, since their inception in 1995. In every civic election, BJP candidates have won well over half of mayoral positions in the state, while the plebian SP and BSP have secured more than one mayoral post each. This has allowed the BJP to dominate city-level institutions of government (Verma, 2006; Verma, 2001). This is in sharp contrast to the party's fortunes at the state level which have waned considerably over the same period. The mayors of the largest cities of Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Agra and Ghaziabad have consistently been from the BJP. While the formal powers of municipal corporations remain weak compared to state governments, control of municipal corporations is important for other reasons. Firstly, given the

mediated nature of the Indian state, control over the local municipality enables political parties to dominate patronage networks. This has important political consequences at the neighbourhood level.

Nicolas Jaoul provides an illustration of how the BJP's control of the local municipality hindered Dalit political assertion in Kanpur. When activists sought to recruit in the Haddi Godown locality, they met considerable resistance from local residents. As Jaoul observes:

There was also an element of rational choice in [local residents'] reluctance [to support Dalit activists] Being identified as Ambedkarites⁶¹ was professionally problematic, since the BJP controlled the municipality and the sanitation departments were in the hands of officers who belonged to the RSS.⁶² Being identified as Ambedkarites could lead to undue sanctions (late payment of wages, refusal of holidays on desired dates, postings in faraway parts of town, etc.) and harassment at work. Their basti becoming the new Valmiki stronghold of the Dalit Panthers was against their professional interests, since such identification risked putting them at odds with their professional hierarchy (Jaoul, 2012: 107).

This description exemplifies the extent to which control of the local institutions of governance has facilitated elite resistance to subaltern political assertion. Jaoul's work also underlines the importance of the BSP government's control of the state for Dalit political mediators. For instance, the policy of appointing Dalit officials in key positions allowed political actors to subvert local structures of power. Dalit mediators could directly access state-appointed bureaucrats on behalf of the local Dalit community, thereby partially redressing the partiality of the local administration towards wealthier social groups (Jaoul, 2007, 214).

The increased political success of the BSP, allowed militant Dalit activists to activate political networks that circumvented the political hierarchy of the municipality in Kanpur. The support of provincial channels of patronage and power networks, provided these activists the resources, and social status to eventually displace the BJP's control over patronage and political support in the aforementioned Haddi Godown neighbourhood (Jaoul, 2012, 112). Nicolas Jaoul's account illustrates

⁶¹ Ambedkarite refers to those who subscribe to B.R Ambedkar's political ideology, which emphasises the complete rejection of Hinduism, and the assertion of a separate Dalit identity. Its proponents also follow Ambedkar's dictum that achieving political power through democratic means is the key to Dalit emancipation. The BSP is India's most successful Ambedkarite political party.

⁶² The BJP has its intellectual origins in the RSS or Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The RSS is a mixture of a cultural association, a Hindu nationalist para-military force and a political association. It continues to play a central role in the internal politics of the BJP.

how competition for political control at the neighbourhood-level was shaped by the political composition of the state and local government. It also indicates the extent to which the fault-lines of conflict between state and local government are embedded in UP's social relations. As Mehrotra observes "the lower-caste versus upper-caste conflict in UP is something of a rural urban divide" (Mehrotra, 2007, 370).

Caste-derived inequality intersects considerably with an urban-rural divide. Two-thirds of UP's urban population is upper-caste, even though these groups constitute roughly one-fifth of the overall population (Mehrotra, 2007, 370). However, all social groups, particularly landless Dalits, increasingly look to urban areas for employment. Nevertheless, a large proportion of migration to the cities remains circular rather than permanent (Kapur et al., 2010). In part, this is understandable given the economics of rural to urban migration in India. Barriers to permanent migration include unstable employment conditions in the informal economy which employs the majority of Indians (Harriss-White, 2003; Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2001) as well as the continued unaffordability of cities for the poor (Kundu, 2009, 55). At the same time, urban elites place deliberate barriers to the legal inclusion of the urban poor. This results in a process of exclusionary urbanisation (Kundu, 2011).

In UP, this process has been reflected in the resistance of local elites to policies legalising the residential status of the urban poor, many of whom are Dalits. This is most vividly expressed by municipal corporations' response to the BSP government's Urban Poor Land Tenure Scheme, announced in 2009. This scheme provided for the legalisation of unauthorised slums which had come up on government land. Given Dalit and Muslim preponderance in urban slums (Mehra, 2011) they stood to benefit the most from this scheme (Verma, 2010, 1). However, BJP dominated municipal governments were charged with implementing the scheme. They were overtly hostile to this scheme. The mayors of UP's largest cities challenged the state government's right to hand over land that came under their jurisdiction. As the BJP mayor of Lucknow maintained:

The Corporation is the rightful owner of the land. How can the government give ownership right to slum dwellers without obtaining the consent of the elected board of the corporation?" (Bhatt, 2009: 1).

The BJP mayor of Kanpur accused the state government of destroying local democracy and asserted his corporation's right to decide on the extent to which the scheme would be implemented (Ibid.). Accordingly, this scheme's implementation was patchy, with only 7,072 beneficiaries across the state of UP. In Agra and Ghaziabad, both cities with hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers (USAID,

2005: Urban Health Initiative, 2010) the number of beneficiaries was limited to 459 and 161 households respectively. It is unsurprising that BJP-dominated local bodies were then loath to effectively implement measures that could change the demographic composition of the city in favour of groups which are not natural BJP constituencies.

Despite their lack of formal powers and financial dependence on state governments, urban local bodies still possess the power to subvert the implementation of schemes antithetical to the interests of powerful urban social groups. This may explain some of the BSP government's implacable hostility to local democracy in urban areas. Under Mayawati, the state government sought to abolish direct elections for the Mayor's office. While this measure was deemed unconstitutional by the state judiciary, no civic elections were conducted in UP during the BSP's five-year administration between 2007 and 2012 (Tripathi, 2011, 1). It also sought to remove the Mayor's ability to allocate state resources to infrastructural funding, and hand these powers over to the state appointed District Magistrate (Ibid.). The BSP has also refrained from contesting urban local body elections since 2006. This is an arena where the BSP has been consistently and thoroughly outperformed by the BJP in a complete reversal of both parties' fortunes in state level elections. The struggle between state and local government over control of urban areas should be contextualised by the centrality of cities as engines of wealth creation (Zerah and Kennedy, 2008). It also reflects the extent to which the city is increasingly the locus of aspiration for all social groups.

Accordingly, the struggle to determine urban spatial patterns and control of key urban resources could be marked by an axis of conflict between local and state government, and between poorer and richer social groups. With the loss of power at the state level, urban local bodies may be sites of elite resistance to the political ascendancy of lower castes. Conversely, marginal city-dwellers, particularly Dalits may rely on state-level agencies for the provision of welfare that may be less readily available through local structures of governance.

Local democracy may empower the already powerful rather than expand the ability of excluded urban residents to influence the local state. John Harriss recently underlined "the paradox that increasing opportunities for participation may go to increase political inequality" (Harriss 2007: 2719). The ambivalent relationship between marginalised citizens and local democracy is not unique to UP or even to India. This point is emphasised by Harlan Koff who "openly questions whether too much local democratic participation can hinder ethnic participation" (Koff, 2007, 332). Based on his comparative city-level analysis of local government and the socio-economic exclusion of ethnic minorities in the United States, France and Italy, Koff emphasises the risks associated with

decentralisation. Instead, appeals to local democracy, he argues, can be used to legitimise majoritarian resistance to the greater integration of marginalised minorities. The mayor of Kanpur's appeal to local democracy in order to deny mainly Muslim and Dalit slum-dwellers legal tenure echoes Koff's point. Moreover, Koff argues that decentralisation also raises the informal barriers to integration and exposes local officials to majoritarian pressures. However, it is unlikely that Koff's advocacy of multi-level governance would extend as far as to support the Mayawati administration's desire to completely abolish local democracy. Nonetheless, his point about the contradictory relationship between local democracy and the socio-economic exclusion of deprived social groups is a salient one.

The shape of public space, therefore, is the outcome of 'social negotiations and contest' that are governed by, but also seek to challenge, relations of power and dominance (Gorringe, 2006, 64). Power relations in society construct a spatio-symbolic order whereby 'economic, political, and cultural resources are concentrated and communicated in society through the built environment' (Farrar, 2008, 36). Accordingly, the construction of urban space is not just the result of political action, but also part of its production. This is because power relations in any given society are:

...made material in the built environment as economic, cultural, political resources are consolidated and represented in spatio-symbolic forms.... Power is reflected in and exercised through the production and organisation of space (Farrar, 2008, 37).

Alongside institutions of power, cities are shaped by broader and shifting economic forces (Zerah and Kennedy, 2008; Chatterjee, 2003; Patel and Deb, 2006):

Urbanisation in India is organised in a web of complex configurations and aspects, which have articulated themselves unevenly. [This unevenness is due to] ...the way capitalism has historically and spatially structured Indian society and linked it with various actors, political and social institutions and their structures, and the way these in turn have impacted capitalism (Patel and Deb, 2006, 20).

Moreover, urban politics intersects and shapes capitalism through the mediating institutions of formal state authority as well as the informal networks underpinned by caste and kinship networks.

2.4. Caste and Democratic Politics in the Indian Context

The politicisation of caste has played a crucial role in the so-called deepening of Indian democracy by facilitating the increased participation of previously excluded groups into the political process. The disintegration of the previously hegemonic Congress Party, as well as changes in the

pattern of land-ownership which displaced traditional rural elites, is responsible for this major political change. Moreover, the breakdown of the closed agrarian economy of the Indian village allowed previously dominated castes to assert their caste identities freely and to deploy these identities to mobilise support in the arena of democratic politics (Gupta, 2005a).

The trade guilds and kinship networks which articulate caste identity form basic units for political agency in urban India, and caste-based networks of reciprocity sit at the heart of the local state in India. Market-based growth and economic liberalisation appears to have rearranged rather than eroded the institution of caste. The last two sections summarised contemporary scholarship on the issue. Relevant scholarship posits caste as a secular institution central to the construction of “intermediate regimes”, the “informal economy of the powerful in urban centres across India (Harriss-White, 2003; 2006).

Sociologists and political scientists observe how new employment opportunities in towns and cities have enabled landless Dalits to break free from the subjugation of socially dominant landowners. This is a view endorsed by Dalit political entrepreneurs like Kanshi Ram, who viewed subaltern urban migrants as a vanguard for social revolution. The education and employment provided by urban migration shaped a new post-independence Dalit consciousness, which catalysed caste-based democratic mobilisation in both urban and rural North India.

This process, Lucia Michuletti argues, reflects the gradual and steady “vernacularisation” of Indian politics, reflecting the “ways in which values and practices of democracy become embedded in particular cultural and social practices, and in the process become entrenched in the consciousness of Indian politics” (Michuletti, 2008, 1). According to this anthropologist:

...low caste-based political parties emerged in the 1990s because there was a demand for them and people were ready for them. The generation of people who voted for the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party and who began to participate more in the democratic arena partly did so because by the late 1990s faith in democratic ideas and practices was firmly anchored in their everyday life...It follows that by the end of the century democracy in India was not any more an alien phenomenon left by the western colonisers or imposed by local modernised and westernised elites or international agencies. On the contrary, it has taken a life of its own... (Michuletti, 2008, 228).

Michuletti’s ethnography of the Yadav community of Mathura exemplifies the paradoxical deployment of traditional identities for securing material and symbolic benefits through the

acquisition of political power. The Yadavs/Ahirs who traditionally formed a cluster of castes utilised a variety of identities to assert their claims to a variety of different roles. For instance, they claimed high-born Kshatriya status to demonstrate their natural suitability for politics. At the same time, Yadav political entrepreneurs also evoked their ritually low-status in the ritual social order, so as to secure the benefits of affirmative action as OBCs.

The Yadav political elite combined their upward social mobility with a reinvention of their genealogies of descent. Ascendant Yadav elites produced a horizontal caste identity that is effectively deployed to mobilise political support to win elections. Michuletti notes that Yadav politicians seek legitimacy through the evocation of the political skills of the Krishna, the divine cow-herd and warrior God. For politically active Yadavs, “particular value is given to masculinity, bravery, political skills, morality and the abilities of statecraft, all of which are qualities that contemporary Yadavs are said to have inherited from their ancestor Krishna” (Michuletti, 2008, 220). This idiom plays an important role in mobilising the Yadavs as a political unit, and allows them to enjoy the material and status benefits that flow from access to political power.

Kanchan Chandra (2004) argues that this form of ethnic politics succeeds in India’s patronage democracy because Indian elections are effectively auctions of government services (Chandra, 2004). Voting for a caste fellow matters because such an action is viewed as an efficient means of assuring some form of access to state power. Consequently, “voters in patronage-democracies...choose between parties by conducting ethnic head counts rather than by comparing policy platforms or ideological positions” (Chandra, 2004, 1). This implies a form of politics dominated by caste arithmetic, and the contention that the “political fortunes of parties depend primarily on the caste composition of constituencies” (Gupta, 2005a, 421).

Critics argue that this paints an overly simplistic view of the politics of caste. Sohini Guha (2011) contends that UP’s Chamars, who form the core vote of the BSP, were attracted by the party’s discourse on humiliation, and provided the initial critical mass of voters that allowed the party to emerge as a credible force. The Chamars took a considerable risk to throw their lot in with the BSP, which was a rank neophyte compared to the established Congress. Moreover, as political parties seek to gain power by forming broad social coalitions they increasingly offer a mix of programmatic and patronage based benefits of potential voters (Guha, 2011; Pai, 2007). Indeed, Michuletti herself observes that the BSP’s election victory in the 2007 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections was due to a coalition of Dalits, Muslims and upper castes who were partly attracted by the party’s promise to end Mulayam Singh’s brand of strongman politics (Michuletti, 2004, 40).

The core voters of the BSP, and the party's more recent upper-caste supporters shared a common interest in ending the muscular politics of the Yadavs, which allowed for Yadav dominance at the expense of upper castes and Dalits. As Dipankar Gupta argues, "When castes come together, they do so because they believe that their secular interests coincide, which is why it makes good political sense to cement an alliance" (Gupta, 2005a, 421). Moreover, Gupta challenges the argument that Indian voters solely on the basis of caste identity and argues instead that the empirical data indicates many instances of mismatch between caste loyalty and voting behaviour. Gupta points out that the proportion of Jats never exceeded 8 per cent of the population in Western UP, a region of considerable Jat domination. Their dominance, Gupta argues, stemmed from the fact that the Jats were the "best organised and economically the strongest peasant caste in that region" (Ibid.).

2.5. Caste Identity in Contemporary Urban India

Collective action based on ascriptive ethnic identities also provides poorer social groups with political agency. Kanshi Ram, the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), emphasised the importance of urban migration as a catalyst for the politicisation of subaltern castes. This process involves an explicit appeal to caste identity among the poorest urban residents. Badri Narayan Tiwari chronicles the affluent Dalit-Bahujan ideologue's grass-roots compassion for the travails of poorer kinfolk;

"Those people who migrate in large numbers from their villages to big cities...take no possessions with them but only their caste. They leave behind their small huts, land and cattle etc. in the village and settle in the slums, near sewer and railway tracks with nothing else but their one and only position, i.e. their caste" (Kanshi Ram cited in Narayan, 2011, 99).

The BSP leadership saw such migrants as an important vanguard in the politicisation of Dalits. The BSP leadership saw these migrants as an important vanguard in the politicisation of Dalits. As Narayan writes;

A major mobilisation movement carried forward by the BSP was the urban refugee movement. This movement endeavoured to associate the Dalits of the urban slums with the BSP. Kanshi Ram believed that the Dalits who migrate from the villages to the towns, get ready to associate themselves with new political consciousness very quickly as a means of survival. Most of them are educated, read newspapers and magazines and deliberate on political issues (Narayan, 2011, 110).

Cities enable diverse caste groups to obtain necessary economic resources and cultural capital for political and cultural mobilisations. This requires scholars to uncover the causal mechanisms between urban migration and political agency in India. The mechanisms for regime formation involve a reliance on informal institutions and kinship ties amidst ethnic conflict and prevalent poverty (Scott, 1969; Stone 1989).

In the early twentieth century, according to Gooptu, the construction of new identities and political vocabularies during a time of urban transformation was crucial to the urban poor's response to changing power relations (Gooptu, 2001, 143). Reinvented identities allowed the urban poor to redefine "their subjectivity as political actors" and reimagine "their own capabilities as human agents" (Ibid.). There is evidence that the interconnectedness between identity formation, socio-economic inequality and political action has persisted in contemporary India. Scholarship on urban India predominantly focuses on class-based distinctions as constituting the main distinguisher between social groups. This emphasis on class to exclusion of caste may be slightly problematic. As Deshpande and Palshikar observe "it is not that 'individual persons' were situated at particular class locations either by accident or ability" (Deshpande and Palshikar, 2008, 68). Access to economic and political resources continues to be mediated through caste. This is despite predictions that economic change would erode the correlation between an individual's caste identity and occupation (Harriss-White, 2003).

Economic change, urbanisation and the desire for non-agrarian livelihoods have increased the dissociation from hereditary occupations. Yet even non-hereditary occupations often emerge from the traditional occupational niches determined by caste (Harriss-White, 2003, 192). These distinctions are made material by distinct urban spatial arrangements that reflect socio-economic disparities even if they do not reflect the "strict segregation based on caste occupation and residence" found across rural India (Mehra, 2011, 40). Instead, urban India is often marked by the cohabitation of lower castes/classes segregated residentially even if they are proximate to upper caste/upper class areas to which the former settlements often provide manual and everyday services (Ibid.). Research on the urban poor indicates that in the year 2000, Scheduled Castes Scheduled Tribes (STs) (SCs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and Muslims accounted for 91 per cent of the population living below the urban poverty line in 2000 (Ibid.). While the overlap between caste and class is certainly not perfect and complete, relevant scholarship indicates that "urban segregation...appears to hinge on a distinction between upper class/caste Hindu populations vis-à-vis lower class/caste and religious minority populations" (Mehra, 2011, 41). Economic liberalisation and the expansion of the market

have reconfigured the link between caste and occupation rather than eroding it (Harriss-White, 2003, 194). Consequently, Deshpande and Palshikar (2008) are probably correct to assert that “caste will continue to be the main node around which much of mobilisation will take place” (p.68).

2.6. Caste Networks, Informal Institutions and Elite Resistance

Despite subaltern political assertion, the devolution of powers to the city level has empowered urban elites, who possess the material resources and social networks to most effectively engage in local politics (Tawa Lama-Rewal 2007; Harriss, 2006). This is because economic activity in contemporary India remains true to Mark Granovetter’s illustration (Granovetter, 1985).

Even in the contemporary period, social and kinship relationships and connections underpin economic activity in the market place. The political economy of these towns are based on traditional means of economic exchange, where credit and financing of trade and manufacture depended on trade guilds, local connections and trust. Absent dependence of formal institutions and legal system, the market place has its own norms to mitigate risks and uncertainty. These are built around social norms and caste and kinship networks. The power of informal institutions can never be underestimated in urban India and other transition economies. Both Russia and India have experienced economic transitions following the decisions of political elites to facilitate the productive capacities engendered by the capitalist market economy. Alena Ledenva demonstrates the manner in which informal institutions govern economic exchange in the Russian market economy created after the fall of the Soviet Union (Ledenva, 2006).

Informal institutions are particularly valuable if small social groups are seeking to engage in practices that enable them to mobilise political power and gain access to the state. Caste associations retain special significance in contemporary urban India (Deshpande, 2010). Economic change accompanied by increased urbanisation, Dipankar Gupta (2000) argues, has played a major role in allowing caste patriotism to flourish.

This process of identity formation was inter-connected with distinctions based on caste, religion and socio-economic status. For instance, ex-Untouchables, who gained an economic niche in the provision of services considered unclean, developed anti-caste identity repertoires and resisted mainstream Hindu practice (Gooptu, 2001, 184). On the other hand, urban Shudra castes, whose manual occupations were considered low-status, sought to reinvent their caste identity by claiming higher status within the Hindu caste system. This involved projecting a martial political culture that sometimes overlapped with a militant Hindu nationalism (Gooptu, 2001, 236). Trade guilds, cultural

associations and politically constituted *caste-corporate bodies* (Guha, 2013) are governed by educated or affluent elites and rely on kinship ties to engage with their caste-fellows.

Craig Jeffrey points to informal networks among rich farmers that allowed strong bonds with local politicians and the lower-level state machinery have allowed dominant groups like the Jats to sustain their economic and social advantages despite the increased participation of the lower castes in formal politics (Jeffrey, 2008).

These advantages are reproduced in urban contexts. Lucia Michelutti's account of Yadav local politics in Mathura also indicates how caste-based political mobilisation at the local level can be successfully deployed as a resource for securing dominance. This has led to the erosion of the socio-economic position of older, upper caste elites. The Bania caste, who are traditionally shopkeepers and traders have faced the greatest challenge in the Mathura neighbourhood of Sadar Bazaar. As Michelutti writes:

The antagonism between the Yadavs and the merchant community...is rooted in the social and economic transformations that have occurred in Sadr Bazaar over the last fifty years. The Yadav local political and economic upsurge has substantially disempowered [the Bania]. Yadavs and Banias compete, therefore, to occupy the same space, whether it is religious, social, residential, or occupational. However, it is the Yadavs who are in the ascendancy, and it is the Yadavs who are managing to dislodge the Banias from the temples they patronise, the houses they own, and the businesses they run, and ultimately they seem to claim the same caste status (Michelutti, 2007, 652).

Michelutti observes that the rise of the Yadavs has involved the significant deployment of *goonda* [strongman] politics, which has played an important role in allowing formerly plebeian groups to assert control of localities. In the case of the Yadavs, she argues that this form of politics is effective in capturing power at the city level because of the efficiency of the organisational structure of caste associations:

In the case of Mathura Yadavs this organisational structure is based on the caste association networks and the Samajwadi Party. Local caste associations produce a plebeian style of politics using vernacular idioms which are the product of the encounter between caste and democratic politics and feed the populist rhetoric of the Samajwadi Party (Michelutti, 2007, 646).

Similar linkages exist between Jatav caste associations, the leather industry and the BSP's political repertoire in Agra (Jaffrelot, 2003). Thomas Bloom Hansen documents similar assertions by plebeian groups among Muslims in Mumbai, who also turned towards strongmen politicians of the Samajwadi Party as the best defenders of their interests against the violently anti-Muslim identity politics of Hindu nationalists (Hansen, 2005).

Public spaces in Mumbai were widely used by the Shiv Sena, "as sites for the display of the Hindu right's violent political strategies and anti-Muslim rhetoric" (Contractor, 2012, 25). This contributed to the spatial segregation of the city's Muslims which derived from their "growing economic, political and socio-cultural alienation as well as violence" (Ibid.). The resultant alienation from the political process, a distrust of the formal institutions of the state, and the consolidation of neighbourhoods along communal identities strengthened the power of a plebeian strong-man politics. Local *dadas* or "big men" from upwardly mobile low-caste Muslim communities developed and deployed their own clientelistic networks as a base for successful electoral mobilisation. They subsequently eroded the dominance of elite Muslim groups (Hansen, 2000). The appeal of these strongmen lay in their efficacy and their ability to ensure a level of spatial security. Muscular politics of this sort appeals to the insecurities of the urban poor. As Hansen explains:

It is the performance of a certain style of public authority – generous but also with a capacity for ruthless violence – that determines who can define and represent "the community", defend neighbourhoods, punish and discipline (Hansen, 2005, 136)

Similarly, in Hyderabad, marginalised Muslims often respond to identity politics which involve the battles for securing and protecting space on a communal basis. Here, this competition is marked by the use of religious festivals to cover the walled Old City with either green flags by the Majlis or saffron flags by the Hindu nationalists. Muslims, the authors argue, transfer their 'emotional attachment to an Islamic space to the political arena' and support the Majlis-e-Etihad-ul-Musalmeen as a protector of poor Muslim neighbourhoods (Rao and Taha, 2012, 211).

Claims over public space have also played a major role in the political mobilisation of historically deprived Scheduled Castes. Spatial arrangements play an important role in perpetuating the marginalisation of castes deemed 'untouchable', as they remain 'preponderant in urban slums, squatter settlements, and housing estates' (Gorrenge, 2006, 48). In response, the Dalit movement has mobilised on the basis of challenging and reconstructing spatial arrangements as a means of exercising political agency (Lyond, 2009; Jaoul, 2006; Gorrenge, 2006). In urban Tamil Nadu, this

has involved the political construction of a Dalit identity centred on segregated neighbourhoods. Here, “Dalit movements seek to create defended neighbourhoods or ‘homes’ within which they can mobilise and campaign for change for fear of social ostracism or retaliatory violence” (Gorringe, 2006, 64).

In Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, the Dalit movement has relied on the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to capture power at the state level, in order to undermine localised power structures (Jaoul, 2006; Lerche, 1994). This has produced a symbolic politics centred around recasting urban space in the name of the Dalit movement, with a particular emphasis on the figure of Ambedkar. As Jaoul observes, “wherever the Ambedkar statue has been installed, Dalits have felt encouraged by this tangible symbol of success” (Jaoul, 2006, 200). Jaoul observes that the practice of Ambedkarite symbolic politics pre-dates the formation of the BSP. However, once in power, the BSP has transformed the scale and scope of this form of political mobilisation, and used it as an important means of communicating its ideology (Loynd, 2009).

The political success of the BSP has triggered a cultural shift amongst Dalits who are increasingly aspirational, and emphasise educating their children (Guha, 2011). The aspirational shift reflects the fullest implementation, in post-independence Indian history, of educational and employment quotas by successive BSP governments (Jaffrelot, 2012).

The BSP has embarked on a vigorous and confrontational cultural politics aimed at transforming the symbolic landscape of Uttar Pradesh. This involves the construction of monuments, museums, universities and libraries honouring the icons of the Dalit movement, most notably the architect of India’s constitution, B.R. Ambedkar (Loynd, 2009; Jaffrelot, 2003). Anupama Rao suggests that the Dalit as a political subject is “India’s first modern, democratic” citizen. As she maintains:

Stifled by the regulations of caste, degraded and humiliated, she had to think modernity through democracy, instead of crafting a nativist modernity that countered the colonial masters while falling short of democratising the illiberal economies of caste (Rao, 2006, 1).

The simultaneous exclusion of Dalits to margins of both the primary and secondary city, as the outcaste, explains the historical importance of the city as a site for the possibilities, and the limitations, of reimagining democratic politics.

The introduction of pro-market reforms in the 1990s coincided with the bottom-up processes of political claim-making exerted by processes labelled by Christophe Jaffrelot as the “democratisation

of Indian democracy” (Jaffrelot, 2007, 82). Mark Granovetter’s novel insights into the sociology of the market provide extremely useful tool to analyse Christopher Bayly’s archetypal *Hindu Corporate Town*. This is because, “social norms, network effects, and self-help all have at times been highly significant for socio-economic life which is embedded in them” (Guha, 2013, 183). Economic activity in the Hindu Corporate Towns of Agra and Ghaziabad remains embedded in these close-knit and powerful elite networks centred on the municipal corporations and city centre of these thriving urban centres. Formal rules include “juridical or quasi-juridical rules that are consciously produced and enforced by mechanisms created for purposes such as enforcement” (Ledeneva, 2006, 17). Both Russia and India have experienced economic transitions following the decisions of political elites to facilitate the productive capacities engendered by the capitalist market economy. Economic activity in contemporary India remains true to Mark Granovetter’s illustration (Granovetter, 1985).

The power of informal institutions can never be underestimated in urban India and other transition economies. Alena Ledeneva demonstrates the manner in which informal institutions govern economic exchange in the Russian market economy created after the fall of the Soviet Union (Ledeneva, 2006). Routine commercial practices, as opposed to individual transactions, are made possible by social relations who engender trust between some individuals and groups and provide enhanced opportunity for cooperation (Granovetter, 1985, 491).

Informal institutions are particularly valuable if small social groups are seeking to engage in practices that enable them to mobilise political power and gain access to the state. Caste associations are particularly important in contemporary urban India (Deshpande, 2010). Economic change accompanied by increased urbanisation, Dipankar Gupta (2000) argues, has played a major role in allowing caste patriotism to flourish. This process of identity formation was inter-connected with distinctions based on caste, religion and socio-economic status. For instance, ex-untouchables who gained an economic niche in the provision of services considered unclean developed anti-caste identity repertoires and resisted mainstream Hindu practice (Gooptu, 2001, 184). On the other hand, urban Shudra castes, whose manual occupations were considered low-status but not as unclean, sought to reinvent their caste identity by claiming higher status within the Hindu caste system. This involved projected a martial political culture that sometimes overlapped with a militant Hindu nationalism (Gooptu, 2001, 236). Trade guilds, cultural associations and politically constituted *caste-corporate bodies* (Guha, 2013) are governed by educated or affluent elites and rely on kinship ties to engage with their caste-fellows.

2.7. Dalit Mobilisation in Uttar Pradesh: Identity, Modernity and Democracy

Jens Lerche (1994) argues that caste identity provides subaltern groups with the means to mobilise against unequal power relations in the context of electoral democracy. He argues that as long as the exploitation of Dalits occurs along caste and class lines, their group awareness will also develop along caste and class lines. Moreover, in the case of Uttar Pradesh, Lerche observes that caste politics among the Dalits produces the basis for the resistance of landless labourers against the dominance of landholding castes. This has been achieved by combining extremely localised collective action with electoral politics at the state level (Lerche, 1994). This strategy reflects the historical nature of dominance, particularly in Western UP, where broad-based geographical organisations have been the preserve of farmers and higher castes. This has stifled the emergence of broader social movements or trade unions among Dalits. Consequently, Dalits have engaged in the process of circumventing regionally dominant caste groups, and focusing on state-level alliances (Ibid.).

A similar point is made by Manuella Ciotti, whose fieldwork in a semi-urban village near Varanasi reveals the importance of Dalit politics as a means of providing her Chamar subjects with a sense of belonging to a larger political community which also provides a sense of strength, security and shared interests (Ciotti, 2006). A Chamar (a Dalit sub-caste known as Jatav in Western Uttar Pradesh) respondent informs Ciotti, “Mayawati cancelled the feelings of smallness amongst people belonging to the lower castes” (Ciotti, 2010, 221). This analysis dovetails with Jens Lerche’s argument that Dalit politics is concerned with crystallising Dalit political mobilisation using the ballot box in order to capture state power, and to then use this power on behalf of Dalit interests (Lerche, 1993). Dalits had to contend with oppressive Jat political assertiveness under the Bharatiya Kisan Union led by Mahendra Singh Tikait resulted in parallel village republics in Western UP where the writ of the state was blocked. Lerche observes that well into the 1990s Jats conducted their dominance openly preventing any form of collective bargaining by Dalit labourers (Lerche, 1999). As Pai observes:

the period from the mid-1960s onwards was marked by increasing atrocities on the Dalits by the middle castes, including the Jats, who, benefiting from the new technology, backward caste movements, and formation of parties such as the BKD, emerged as their direct oppressors in the countryside in place of the upper castes who had been traditionally marked out as the exploiters (Pai, 2011, 1).

However, by 2008, these power dynamics were dramatically altered, as illustrated by the stand-off between Chief Minister Mayawati and Tikait. When Tikait used derogatory, casteist language against

the Dalit Chief Minister, Mayawati responded by sending 6,000 policemen to arrest a man once considered to be a mighty power-broker well above the law. The successive BSP governments in UP, combined with the declining importance of agriculture in the economy, meant that Dalits are no longer subservient to powerful landed interests. Instead Pai notes:

Dalit are no longer willing to work for low wages, expect to be treated as equals and with greater respect. Many studies point to the rise of a small Dalit class that has moved into non-agricultural jobs due to reservations, thereby lessening their dependency on the landowning class in the countryside (Ibid.)

This reflects the mutually reinforcing relationship between economic change and the BSP's particular brand of Dalit assertion. The BSP emerged only after the creation of an urbanised Dalit middle class, as well as the reduced dependence on agricultural wages. Jens Lerche also observes that the BSP has been a force for modernisation of social relations as it has used constitutional means to challenge entrenched structures of dominance and exploitation. As Lerche argues:

Paradoxical as it may sound, the agricultural laborer's caste based struggles may bring the Indian state's modernisation project and the creation of genuinely capitalist agrarian labour relations further than the Congress Party ever managed (Lerche, 1994, 1)

Politically mobilisation around status, therefore, are is not just about social issues surrounding purity and pollution. It also relates to the strivings of political entrepreneurs who recognise the interrelation between social status, occupational mobility and questions of wealth and power. (Gupta, 2005a, 415).

An analysis of the ideological underpinning of the BSP's Ambedkarite mobilisation would suggest that not only is Lerche broadly right, but also that this link between modernisation and Dalit mobilisation is more than just a coincidence. Dalit leaders on the other hand, use an Ambedkarite idiom to communicate with their supporters. Ciotti observes, "all Chamars are convinced that the BSP is moving along the path suggested by Ambedkar, and that it is working towards the fulfilment of the leaders' dreams for the Scheduled Castes" (Ciotti, 2010, 211). Moreover, Ambedkar's role in enshrining the rights of Dalits in the Indian constitution is an essential part of the veneration of his memory among Dalits, and a vital source of legitimacy for Dalit politics (Jaoul, 2006; Ciotti, 2010; Pandey, 2006). Particularly noteworthy is the manner in which the abstract, liberal-democratic ideals of the Indian constitution have been embodied in the popular iconography surrounding Ambedkar.

Dipankar Gupta argues that Ambedkar's rejection of Hinduism in favour of a rationalist and modernist Buddhism, "...was a highly symbolic political act that helped fuse Dalit antipathy toward

Hinduism and, at the same time, that enabled them to leverage their new identity to great political advantage” (Gupta, 2005a, 420). In recent decades, Ambedkar’s image has been repeatedly used by Dalits to claim their rights under the Indian constitution. Jaoul notes that the symbolic deployment of Ambedkar statues has an important mobilisation underpinning:

To Dalit villagers whose rights and dignity have been regularly violated, setting up the statue of a Dalit statesman wearing a red tie, and carrying the constitution invokes dignity, pride in emancipated citizenship and a practical acknowledgement of the extent to which the enforcement of laws would change their lives (Jaoul, 2006, 205).

This form of symbolic communication has formed a vital link between Dalit political elites and poorer rural Dalits, who venerate Ambedkar as a messiah of liberation (Ciotti, 2010; Jaoul, 2006). Moreover, the Dalit movement is marked by an emphasis on modernity, education and urbanisation. As Gina Pandey writes:

...Dalit leaders have stressed the need for Dalits to look to the future and to move to the towns where they could escape from some of the worst disabilities of the caste system as experienced in the countryside (Pandey, 2006, 1786).

Similarly, as Professor Nagaraj observes:

The Ambedkarite fascination towards the ideals of modernisation...has its roots in [Ambedkar’s] confrontation with Gandhi...The Dalit movement has internalised the Ambedkarite fear of the village society...the promised land is the modern city, which involves going away from the old habitats and their memories (Negara, 1993, 57-58).

Ciotti argues that these ideals have been internalised by poorer, rural Dalits and not just by Ambedkarite intellectuals and activists. Drawing from her fieldwork in eastern UP, she argues that:

For Chamars the city is often invoked as a resource for new living and working possibilities...State mythologies around development through education, employment and democratisation flourished amongst its most disadvantaged citizens...The Chamars were particularly attracted by the state’s vision of change, mediated by the ideals of equality put forward by Dalit historical leaders and movements (Ciotti, 2010, 21).

It is important observe that this discourse of modernity is infused by a religious and utopian ethos. As Ciotti writes:

The emancipatory nature of modernity among Chamars does not lie in liberation from the elements of no rationality, such as tradition and religion, but in replacing forms of oppressing traditions with liberating ones (Ciotti, 2010, 146)

As Dalit politics matures in India, and as the powerful BSP faces new challenges and an increasingly aspirational and urbanising electorate eager to escape the drudgery of the village economy, it remains to be seen whether this modernist ethos will inform the BSP's agenda for securing political power in India's most populous state.

Part II: The BSP, and the construction of urban regimes: Jatavs in Agra and Gurjars in Ghaziabad

The following two chapters are derived from empirical data gathered through elite interviews and ethnographic fieldwork over the course of a year in Agra and Ghaziabad. The two chapters delve into the development of the BSP's respective urban regimes in the two cities. Between 2007 and 2013, the BSP constructed successful multi-caste electoral coalitions that combined political mediation with institutionalised arrangements between political actors, the local state and business. The two chapters will examine the distribution of influence of different stakeholders in the process of urban government. Chapter Three examines the preponderance of Agra's Jatavs in the BSP's power networks. Chapter Four, on the other hand, focuses on the preponderance of Gurjar political entrepreneurs who were accommodated by the BSP. The Jatav power networks in Agra and Gurjar ones in Ghaziabad, took advantage of the presence of a BSP state government to gain privileged access to the state. Political entrepreneurs associated with the BSP gained privileged access to Chairpersons and Chief Engineers in the urban development authorities, the District Magistrate's office, the Municipal Commissioner's office, and the Chief Engineers in the Agra and Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.

The cultivation of political networks between political actors and the senior urban bureaucracy was encouraged by the state government, which sought to institute a political environment conducive for the promotion of pro-business urban expansion. The political networks helped institute lucrative Public Private Partnerships in infrastructure, real estate and affordable housing programmes. Moreover, the power networks in both cities provided the formal and informal institutional mechanisms through which economic resources were transferred to the BSP's core constituency, the Dalit-Bahujan working class. Chapters Three and Four are therefore detailed expositions of the

construction of these political networks. Both chapters also emphasise role of caste and kinship ties in facilitating interpersonal trust, a prerequisite for successful economic activity of the scale and magnitude required to sustain the BSP's multi-caste coalition in both cities.

In urban Uttar Pradesh, non-elected officials are key examples of representations of authority, expertise and power generated outside the city. Local elected politicians, such as the ward councilor and the mayor do not have anywhere near the power that is awarded to the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and the Chairman of the Urban Development Authority. These officials are appointed by the state government. In this manner they are representations of authority and power that is generated from elsewhere. The District Magistrate is perhaps the most powerful of all offices in a city, with considerably greater power than the mayor. The DM sits on the board of the key urban development authorities and is responsible for issuing business licenses and overseeing public projects. Under the BSP government, the DM was charged with the smooth facilitation of Public Private Partnerships, the transfer of public resources to favoured business houses and the construction of affordable housing schemes.

The District Magistrate has the power to grant approval to key projects and also to release and sanction funds for critical projects. Officials in the Development Authority would be subordinate to the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate in turn must respond to the demands of powerful state-level politicians. In any given city, the development authority is another extremely powerful actor in urban governance. Development Authorities were established by law in 1973 – the UP Development Authorities Act handed over the most important urban resource to these unelected bodies, whose chiefs are appointed by the state government. The 1970s, under the tenure of Indira Gandhi, were clearly a time of authoritarian statecraft in urban India.⁶³⁶⁴⁶⁵

The formal institutions of urban government are governed by informal arrangements between senior state officials, political entrepreneurs and commercial elites. The unofficial networks that characterise power in the Indian context are extremely important. Reciprocal networks of exchange and loyalties that are within the bureaucratic cadre and between politicians and bureaucrats form the central nexus of power in the context of a given urban area in Uttar Pradesh. It is extremely hard to map this arrangement and to delineate the exact contours of this power. This is because social connections must remain, to a large extent, secret, as they are used to circumvent the formal regulations of office.

⁶³ Interview with PK Joshi, Agra, April 8th, 2013.

⁶⁴ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Agra, April 9th, 2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with Vikrant Tongad, Ghaziabad, September 14th, 2013.

The BSP used its control over the state government to appoint District Magistrates, Municipal Commissioners, Development Authority Chairs, Chief Engineers in the Municipal Corporation, and bureaucratic managers at the helm of various District Urban Development Authorities, the Departments for Town and Country Planning and the Water Board.⁶⁶ Officers from the elite Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Provincial Civil Service (PCS) cadres obtained influential offices of urban government through their favourable connections with the BSP. In this manner, the BSP was able to concentrate influence through the deliberate deployment of a managerial elite selected on the basis of their ability to competently implement the BSP's political priorities. It made practical political sense for the BSP to deploy technocrats and a bureaucratic elite into positions of power in urban government. These actions reflect a long-term political strategy which views the state bureaucracy, in particular its managerial elite, as the most critical agents of social change.⁶⁷

Urban Development authorities control the process of real-estate development in collusion with the economic elites of Agra and Ghaziabad. The officials in charge of the Agra and Ghaziabad Development Authority are appointed by the Chief Minister's Office. The process of economic activity is shaped by the political alignments in the state capital. Nonetheless, urban elites exercise considerable influence of local political power through informal power networks, with the ability to form alliances with bureaucrats allied with whichever political party controls power in the Uttar Pradesh capital. Commercial elites from the Vaishya and Panjabi community and upwardly mobile landowners from the agrarian hinterlands of both cities possess long-standing associations with professional intermediaries, who possess the relevant connections with the permanent bureaucracy as well as with local business. These networks are guided by caste as much as by class. Craig Jeffrey outlines this aspect of social dominance succinctly:

In Srinivas' schema, dominance is partly a function of economic wealth...Srinivasan identifies dominant castes that monopolise agricultural land and lucrative white-collar and professional occupations. As principal landowners, the dominant caste enjoyed a privileged position within a system of exchange of goods and services between castes...Srinivasan describes how members of the dominant caste invest in the education of their children, thereby in Bourdieu's terms, converting their wealth into forms of cultural capital or 'creditworthiness' (Jeffrey, 2001, 221).

⁶⁶ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Sadar Bazaar, Agra, 29th November, 2012.

⁶⁷ Interview with RK Singh, Uttar Pradesh Sales Tax Department, 16th September, 2013.

Dominant caste groups are able to convert their rural assets into urban cultural capital, which provides access to economic activity. Nonetheless, dominant communities like the Tyagis and Gurjars in Ghaziabad, and Jats and Yadavs in Agra rely on connections with Brahmins and Kayasths professional intermediaries in order to access elite power networks. The long-standing associations between the traditional upper castes continue to place major barriers to entry for dominant castes who have made recent entry into the urban centres of Ghaziabad and Agra.

The BSP's ascension to power provided unprecedented political access for Dalits in Agra and Gurjars in Ghaziabad. The BSP relied on Jatav political entrepreneurs in Agra in order to ensure the transfer of economic resources to poorer Dalit neighbourhoods. Local commercial elites from Vaishya and Brahmin backgrounds were compelled to develop associations with Jatav entrepreneurs who exploited their connections with Dalit bureaucrats in the Agra Development Authority and the Agra Municipal Corporation. Commercial elites relied on Jatav bureaucrats in order to gain access to the state. The traditional elites of Agra and Ghaziabad retained a considerable degree of political influence because of their ability to raise start-up capital and access credit. They were indispensable for the BSP's urban development agenda in both cities. In both, upper-caste and intermediate-caste elites managed Public Private Partnerships in collaboration with the BSP state government. The BSP relied on non-Dalit contractors to incorporate Dalits into economic activity in both cities. In Ghaziabad, Gurjar entrepreneurs formed the main component of the BSP's urban regime in the city, as the city lacked Jatavs engaged in independent economic activity. This is in contrast to Agra, where a long-history of Jatav manufacturers and private business has provided this community with economic independence.

3. Claiming Power from Above and Below. Agra as the Crucible for Dalit Politics, 1956-2013

3.1. Introduction: Agra and three waves of Dalit assertion

Uttar Pradesh has experienced three waves of Dalit assertion since the start of the 20th century. The first two waves were associated with the Ambedkarite Republican Party of India, which has its roots in the Scheduled Caste Federation of India. The founders of the BSP precipitated the third wave of Dalit assertion in the state. This wave culminated in 2007, with the BSP successfully gaining a legislative majority. The wave ebbed in 2012, when the party lost the state elections. In Agra, the BSP's ability to cement a winning electoral coalition depended on a major demographic shift. Large numbers of Jatav Dalits of western Uttar Pradesh (UP) shifted off the land and into urban areas.

Urban, educated Dalits remained at the forefront of the neo-Buddhist revival, which emphasised their community's conversion as means of ideologically contesting a stratified and oppressive Hindu social order. Agra's Dalit leather manufacturers emerged as prominent supports of the lawyer and political activist Ambedkar before Indian independence. Prominent Jatav business-owners sent a telegram of support to Ambedkar in London at the Third Round Table Conference on constitutional reform in British India. The telegram expressed an unequivocal rejection of Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru's claim that the Congress Party best represented the interests of Dalits.⁶⁸ In 1956, Dr. Ambedkar's rally at the city's Red Fort, enhanced Agra's importance as the political centre of Dalit separatism from the caste Hindu hierarchy. At this rally, Ambedkar emphasised the need for Dalits to collectively embrace Buddhism as political ideology of descent, and emphasised the idea of Dalits as subjugated original inhabitants of India. Independent India's constitution abolished Untouchability and guaranteed freedom of religion. Ambedkar, India's first Law Minister and a constitutional scholar, urged Dalits to use these freedoms and civic rights to obtain political power and construct a modern Social Democracy on Indian soil (Lynch, 1969).

Educated Dalits, mainly from the Mahar and Chamar-Jatav caste clusters, formed the Republican Party of India (RPI) a year after Ambedkar's death. The RPI attracted educated Dalits in Maharashtra and western Uttar Pradesh in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. BP Maurya, from Aligarh, emerged as the party's most prominent leader in Uttar Pradesh, while his protégé, Master Man Singh, emerged as the party's leader in Agra. Both men emphasised Buddhism as an ideology of social solidarity and Dalit political action (Lynch 1969; Jaffrelot, 2003). While BP Maurya reached out to Aligarh's large

⁶⁸ Interview with Malkhan Singh, Buddhist Temple, Gwalior Road, Agra 2nd December, 2012.

Muslim electorate (Jaffrelot, 2003), Master Man Singh succeeded in forging an electoral alliance between “untouchable” Jatavs and so-called “backward castes” from the Nishada and Kushwaha communities in Agra.⁶⁹

The RPI achieved short-lived electoral success in Agra before being co-opted by the hegemonic Congress Party (Jaffrelot, 2003). The decline of the RPI reflected the difficulties of Dalit politics in a context, of widespread poverty, casteism and factionalism. Nonetheless, the RPI laid the foundations for the BSP’s subsequent success in mobilising Dalits in Uttar Pradesh. The BSP’s emergence as the single largest party in Western Uttar Pradesh, is a hallmark of the RPI’s pioneering efforts in mobilising electoral alliances between educated Dalits and other disenfranchised social groups in the regions large urban, industrial centres.⁷⁰

The third wave of Dalit assertion began in the mid-1980s, when Kanshi Ram and Mayawati used the All Indian Backward (SC, ST, OBC) and Minority Communities Employees Federation, BAMCEF, as an organisational vanguard to mobilise Dalit elites and the urban working class to break the Congress’s political stranglehold over this community

The BAMCEF trade union provided an extremely effective network for the organisation of educated middle classes amongst Dalits, Backward castes and Muslims. The trade union, dominated by the charismatic Kanshi Ram and his political protégée, Mayawati enabled their entry into electoral politics. The institution of BAMCEF provided Kanshi Ram with the necessary social status to gain considerable prominence amongst urban Dalits in Delhi, and across North India.

BAMCEF and the BSP first cultivated political networks amongst urban Dalits, who were then utilised to reach out to their rural kinsfolk. In western UP, the field-site of many of the aforementioned scholars investigating the extent of social change, Chamar labour has shifted from the agrarian sector and into urban and industrial occupations (Guha, 2011, 19). In Agra, the Jatav migration into the city became an exodus in the wake of caste violence and massacres in the surrounding districts of Western UP, Rajasthan and Madhya between 1990 and 1992.⁷¹ This was a critical turning point that established the city as a Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) bastion, thereby displacing the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Scholarship on rural areas often refers to the importance of opportunities outside

⁶⁹ Interview with Master Man Singh, Bijligar Agra, 4th December, 2012.

⁷⁰ Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, 25th November, 2012.

⁷¹ The most critical turning point in this narrative concerns the Panwari Massacre, which occurred in 1990. http://articles.latimes.com/1990-06-25/news/mn-462_1_wedding-procession. (Date accessed, 14th September, 2015).

the village in mitigating unequal power relations (e.g. Jeffrey et al., 2008; Lerche, 1999; Pai and Singh, 1998).

As Holston (2008) observed in another context, “the process of demanding legal recognition for unauthorised neighbourhoods becomes both the context and substance of a new urban citizenship” (Holston, 2008, 4). The construction of the Dalit neighbourhood forms the social and economic basis for urban politics in the city. This social and political fact has had important ramifications for the BSP’s approach to affordable housing and squatters’ rights.

In this chapter, I argue that the BSP’s affordable housing policies draw on historical repertoires of the urban Dalit neighbourhood as the site and crucible of collective social emancipation through political consciousness and protest. These policies demonstrate the extent to which the BSP as a political party has a keen understanding of the material demands of its core constituency in the context of Western Uttar Pradesh. The BSP identity as a political party derives from a civil servants’ trade union.

The party emerged out of the Backward and Minorities Central Employees Federation (BAMCEF) in the 1980s. Even as Kanshi Ram, the BSP’s founder, recruited extensively from the ranks of the civil service, Mayawati emerged as a political activist mobilising in working-class Dalit neighbourhoods. Kanshi Ram offered Dalit and Backward Caste civil servants the promise of political power and high office in return for ensuring the BSP’s electoral success. Mayawati, on the other hand, mobilised middle- and working-class Dalits on the basis of their material needs. There was a particular emphasis on the provision of economic resources, housing and civic amenities to neglected Dalit neighbourhoods.⁷²

Once, the BSP came power in 2007, it appointed senior civil servants associated with BAMCEF into positions of authority, such as District Magistrates, in the Agra Development Authority and in the Agra District Urban Development Authority. They were charged with ensuring the provision of affordable housing and major home improvements to poor Dalits and Muslims. The BSP government’s policies regarding affordable housing and integrated neighbourhood development are products of this tradition. They also mark a shift from patronage politics (Chandra, 2004) and towards the provision of programmatic linkages (Guha, 2011) and “post-clientelistic initiatives” (Manor, 2009; 2013).

⁷² Interview with Pramod Maurya, Agra, 8th April 2013.

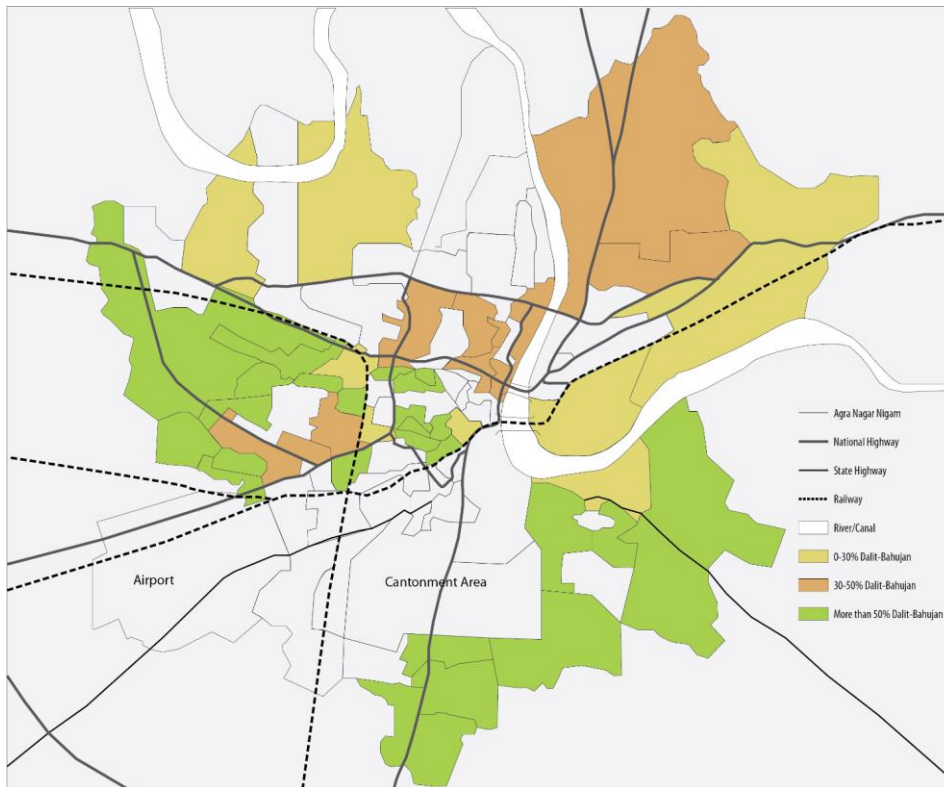
This chapter is divided into five parts. First, the chapter seeks to establish the link between Dalit assertion and urban migration. The second section traces the history of the secondary city of Agra as the source of subaltern political agency. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on the manner in which Jatav migrants to the city asserted the independence of the Dalit neighbourhood from the prevailing caste hierarchy of the city. The settlement of the Dalit neighbourhood emerged as the primary means of validating a new urban citizenship. This reflects the outcome of protracted political conflict over urban public institutions. The fourth section is concerned with the practical policy implications that emerged in the wake of an ascendant Dalit governing elite which deployed informal institutions to exert power within the city's formal governing apparatus. In particular, it looks at the manner in which this politically assertive Jatav elite has established power networks in the contemporary period. This final section illustrates the mechanisms through which Agra's ascendant Jatav elite deploy community linkages with poorer kinsfolk to institute networks combining philanthropy, economic activity and local political power. These relatively recent power networks have enabled an ascendant Jatav elite to gain considerable influence in the public organisations of the primary city. This reflects the significant success of contemporary Dalit politics and protest in the city.

The primary city is made up of the elite-dominated, colonial urban centre. This is the seat of governmental authority, including the office of the District Magistrate, the Judiciary, the Police Headquarters, the Development Authority, and the Municipal Corporation. It is the home of political elites, senior bureaucrats and the city's commercial elite. It is primarily upper-caste in its demographics, and the site of the most valuable real estate. It is governed through the formal institutions and informal arrangements coordinated by the city's elites, including its intellectuals, who act as the key conduits between business and the bureaucracy. The secondary city on the other hand, is the home of the city's migrants and service populations. They provide the labour and the resources necessary for the primary city. This is the site of urban populations, who also form the bulk of the electorate. The caste profile of the secondary city is more diverse, including poorer agrarian communities, lower castes, Dalits and Muslims.

The geography of the primary city reflects the power and status of historical elites. Formerly the site of British colonial authority, it is now the centre of upper-caste power and authority in Agra. Political power is embedded in networks of commerce and brokerage centred on local political arrangements located primarily in the Municipal Corporation. The primary city, the political and commercial centre, falls within the remit of the Municipal Corporation. The Agra Development Authority, whose jurisdiction extends beyond the Corporation, also falls within the political networks of the primary

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA
AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

city. The city's commercial and political elite are therefore the social groups with the power to implement or ignore the Agra Master Plan conceived by the development authority. Their leadership is crucial for the success of all land-use decisions. As the inhabitants of the secondary city have been vigorously exercising their electoral franchise, new elite groups have been created amongst Dalit and Backward communities. These groups hold power in the suburban and peri-urban neighbourhoods outside the Agra city centre. These communities have also chosen political leaders to represent their interests in the political arenas of the primary city, even if the actual real estate around the city centre remains firmly in the hands of the traditional elite.



Map 3.1. The spatial distribution of Agra's Dalit-Bahujan population with the political boundaries of the Agra Nagar Nigam (Municipal Corporation).

Accordingly, caste-based mobilisation is about the articulation of material and political interests as much as it is a form of “identity politics” (Jaffrelot, 2012, 1). When the BSP state government intervenes in the local political economy of Agra, it must contend with resistance from traditional elites. These elites retain control over local commerce and local political power in close-knit and closed networks of association rooted in the local marketplaces. The monopoly over local commerce and political power is retained through commercial capital, traditional caste and religious associations.

The construction of Dalit neighbourhoods in Agra is a testament to the centrality of the neighbourhood in forming the basis for collective political action. The settlement of segregated neighbourhoods enabled Agra’s Dalit community to transform their low-caste status into that of an urban yeomanry (Lynch, 1969). The BSP state government appears to have recognised this, and enacted several measures which provide Dalit migrants and the urban poor with the security in tenure in the city. Sudha Pai describes the BSP’s achievements in housing security as “impressive” (Pai, 2009, 1).

The data on affordable homes constructed by the BSP state government between 2008 and 2013 confirms this. The BSP constructed over 16,000 houses in Agra over this period. These included purpose-built housing complexes as well as the re-construction of poor-quality homes in poor neighbourhoods. This chapter discusses the affordable housing and slum regularisation schemes implemented by the BSP state government between 2007 and 2012. The Bhimnagari Integrated Development Scheme established by philanthropists amongst the city’s Jatav elite provides an interesting case study of the emerging Dalit-dominated power networks. In urban Agra, the welfare gains made available to poor Dalits and Muslims vis-à-vis social housing were not reversed.

Obtaining this shift in status has always required political mobilisation centred on seeking access to the state. The Dalit commercial and bureaucratic elite have embedded themselves into power networks in the local state. They provided for the early forms of a welfare state and this can be observed through the public investment priorities of the Agra Municipal Corporation. This has enabled them to retain the loyalty of their working-class kinsfolk through philanthropy and the limited transfer of economic resources.

The BSP, and the Dalit movement from which it has emerged, is largely dependent on Dalit government officials and the Dalit civil society movement alongside the Dalit commercial elite in coordinating collective action. Placing Dalits in positions of power enabled them to develop the social

connections and linkages that prevented large-scale atrocities on poor members of the community once the BSP left office.

In any given urban area, the provincial political context shapes the way political institutions are organised. Agra's political context has changed dramatically with the rise of Jatav politics, as the Jatav elite is now firmly embedded within the local elite of the city. The BSP has dominated the state-level arena of political competition in the Agra agglomeration since the 1996 state assembly elections. In the 2012 elections, the BSP won 7 out of 10 of the assembly constituencies in the Agra agglomeration. Four of the winning candidates were from the Jatav community. Of the three non-Jatavs, one legislator, Suraj Pal Singh, is an upper-caste Rajput. The remaining two are from Backward Castes, including one Kushwaha and one Nishada. The Nishadas and the Kushwahas have been associated with Dalit-led politics since Master Man Singh's famous victory in the 1970 elections. The BSP has also fielded Muslim candidates from the Agra Cantonment constituency, including Chaudhary Mohammed Basheer and Zulfikar Ahmed Bhutto. Both these candidates are from the wealthy Qureshi community. Whether the Jatav dominated governing arrangements will persist or succumb to the waning fortunes of the BSP elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh is an open question.

The BSP has significantly challenged elite dominance over political networks controlled by the BJP at the federal and municipal levels of government. The last section of the chapter focuses on the practical implications of these political changes in working-class Dalit neighbourhoods. The chapter concludes by asserting that the wealthy Jatav elite has been able to retain the loyalty of their working-class kinsfolk precisely through these urban development programs which have provided Dalits with access to elite political networks in the primary city.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.



Map 3.2. The Agra Urban Area: The secondary city emerged in an unplanned fashion along the major highways and arterial roads connecting Agra to district towns and beyond. Rural migrations contributed significantly to the city's expansion.

3.2. Migration and the Three Waves of Dalit Politics in Agra: 1969-1989

The first wave of Dalit assertion began in Agra and Kanpur, where Jatavs and Balmiki achieved a measure of economic independence through their gainful employment in the leather industry in the colonial period (Lynch, 1969; Gooptu, 2001). This form of assertion was mostly symbolic in nature as the overwhelming majority of Dalits were too poor and dispossessed to mount an effective political challenge to an upper-caste Congress party. However, Dr. Ambedkar's speech at the Red Fort in Agra, and his revival of Buddhism struck a chord amongst the leather workers of Agra, whose economic independence and political consciousness created a powerful sense of Dalit solidarity.

The second wave of Dalit assertion occurred in North India in the 1960s and 1970s. This wave is of greater political significance because Jatav political entrepreneurs were able to deploy the Republican Party of India (RPI) as means of providing patronage to communities ritually higher up in the caste hierarchy than the Dalits. In Agra, the BSP has drawn from the Republican Party of India's strategy of winning elections since the early 1960s, through the ability of extending Jatav patronage to Mallahs⁷³, Kushwahas⁷⁴ and Muslims. In Agra, the RPI first won power in 1969 as its Jatav leaders,

⁷³ The Nishadas are a caste of boatmen and riverine transporters. They are not, and have never been, classified as Untouchable.

⁷⁴ The Kushwahas are market-gardeners. Both communities are now classified as Other Backward Castes. Christopher Bayly's *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*. (1988). Page 101, describes the Kurmi-Kushwahas contribution to the urban political economy in considerable depth. Unlike the Jatavs, this community's profession is not ritually classed as polluting. They are a clean caste.

led by Master Man Singh⁷⁵, successfully wove an alliance with Mallahs and Kushwahas. Master Man Singh's strategy illustrates the potency of a political strategy that helps to build a political formation capable of accommodating within its fold historically subjugated ethnic groups belonging to the *Bahujan Samaj* (the non-upper caste masses). Master Man Singh's electoral coalition pre-dates Kanshi Ram's idea of the *Bahujan Samaj*. Nonetheless, his successful political overtures to non-Dalit castes is consistent with Kanshi Ram's conceptualisation of the *Bahujan Samaj* [India's non-elite majority] as encompassing all the downtrodden.

When the local Rajput Member of Parliament denied three Nishadas petitioners' positions as local councillors, arguing that they were criminals who could not be trusted in politics, Master Man Singh argued that the RPI could offer these communities even greater power and status.⁷⁶ He exhorted them to join with the Dalits because:

The Rajputs [Man Singh informed the Nishad political entrepreneurs] will deny you even the role of local councillor, whilst we on the other hand will offer you the positions of MLA if you join us. Together with three Nishad candidates we were able to contest MLA seats in four separate constituencies. The three Nishad candidates won the election. We were further able to offer the Kushwaha community the chance to put up candidates for the positions of local councillors which was denied to them and to the Mallahs under the previous [Rajput] rule.⁷⁷

Master Man Singh further elaborated the successful consolidation of vote blocs:

I was able to win the Jatav vote because of my activism for Dalit emancipation since before independence, and because of my status as a school teacher, while my brother's tailoring business provided the contacts and patronage amongst the less educated rural migrants who cared first for their bellies. Yet we could only win because the Nishadas, and Kushwahas were able to bring along voters from their community, and provided the remaining votes needed to win in the three constituencies.⁷⁸

The aforementioned illustration of an electoral strategy is a successful example of multi-ethnic coalition building. The Republican Party of India which began its mission to incorporate the Dalit political community into the ambit of urban politics. The second wave of Dalit assertion

⁷⁵ Interview with Master Man Singh, Bijlighar, Agra. 1st December 2012

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Interview with Master Man Singh, Agra, 4th December, 2012.

declined and faded as the Congress Party co-opted many of the RPI's senior leadership and ended independent Dalit political assertion in the state.

The formation of the Backward and Minority Central Employees' Federation, by the Dalit civil servant Kanshi Ram, marks the third wave of Dalit assertion in Uttar Pradesh. Political networks which supported the RPI's electoral success in the 1960s, remained intact in the 1980s, and were reactivated by the BAMCEF, the trade union out of which the BSP emerged as a political party. Kanshi Ram used his leadership of the BAMCEF trade union to develop social networks amongst Dalit and Backward Caste bureaucrats. This provided the Panjabi Dalit leader with access to educated and affluent Dalits. This social group, which resented casteism in the bureaucracy, enjoyed respect and esteem as community leaders amongst poorer Dalits.⁷⁹

Kanshi Ram's success in reaching sections of the bureaucracy enabled him to access state infrastructure, which he could covertly use for political activities. For instance, contacts with the Government of India's Department for Communications enabled access to the most modern means of communication free of charge. Kanshi Ram, initially stressed the non-political nature of the BAMCEF trade union, in order to prevent sanctions against sympathetic civil servants for engaging in party political activities. Instead, the use of official networks and infrastructure was justified in terms of advocating the rights of government employees.⁸⁰ Kanshi Ram developed an extensive network of *Dalit-Bahujan* civil servants, many of whom continue to form the bulk of the party's senior leadership and intelligentsia.⁸¹

Pramod Maurya, an affluent Jatav factory-owner from Agra, argued that Kanshi Ram and Mayawati practiced a political division of labour.⁸² Whilst Kanshi Ram established contact and built a support base amongst educated Dalits and Backward castes, Mayawati was charged with reaching out to the Dalit lower middle classes and working poor. This was a milieu Mayawati was intimately familiar with, having grown up in a working-class Dalit migrant colony in Delhi. Pramod Maurya recalls the manner in which Kanshi Ram and Mayawati's simplicity and commitment to their cause struck a chord when they visited Agra:

They would sleep in people's courtyards and rely on common people for food, as they had no money. Kanshi Ram worked in organising the educated people with government

⁷⁹ Interview with Ajoy Bose, New Delhi, 8th November, 2012.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Interview with Sohini Guha, New Delhi, 17th September, 2013.

⁸² Interview with Pramod Maurya, Agra, 13th April 2013.

jobs, whilst Mayawati went to the by-lanes and *Mohallahs* [working-class neighbourhoods]. Whilst Kanshi Ram spoke about revolution, Mayawati spoke about practical matters, promising electricity, running water and basic amenities, which were major luxuries for Dalits in those days.⁸³

Master Man Singh, the firebrand leader of the Republican Party of India, also lent his support to the BSP. The RPI had been coopted by the Congress, however, the party's ideology of Dalit assertion through the ballot box, and the social networks which supported the RPI's electoral success in the 1960s, remained intact in the 1980s.

The BSP has been successful because of its ability to emulate the RPI's strategy in cultivating support among OBC communities whose socio-economic interests converge with those of the Jatavs. In Agra, the BSP has reached out to communities excluded by the city's traditional elites in order to create governing arrangements. The BSP has always been more than a Dalit party. As Yogendra Yadav observes:

...the BSP has never been just a Dalit party, just as the BJP has never been just an upper caste party. The BSP has always drawn more than one-third of its votes from non-Dalits. These 'plus votes' have always been critical to the BSP's electoral success... If you exclude the dominant peasant communities like the Yadavs, Kurmis and Lodhs, the BSP was the first preference of the rest of the OBCs. The BSP got on an average more than 30 per cent of the votes in this group (Yadav, 2007, 1).

Non-dominant Other Backward Caste communities like Nishadas, Kushwahas and Kumhaars have social and economic interests which are very similar to the Dalit communities. Their hereditary occupations as boatmen, market-gardeners, barbers, potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, and tinkers place them in positions of dependence vis-à-vis dominant landed communities in the countryside and wealthy upper-caste communities in towns. Consequently, it is not surprising that this community remains associated with the BSP, as their social location is not different from that of the Dalits, and indeed they have scarcely benefited from Affirmative Action measures intended for Other Backward Castes.

The success of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati's BAMCEF, and its successor the BSP, which worked in close conjunction with independent Jatav exporters and skilled leather workers offers Scheduled Castes the most successful and viable source of political agency in India today. This incomplete

⁸³ Interview with Pramod Maurya, Agra, 11th April, 2013.

transformation of the Dalit community has intersected considerably with urbanisation and the availability of economic opportunities outside the rigidly stratified agrarian economy where Dalits were condemned to servitude as landless labour and serfs.⁸⁴

The third wave remains the most successful political mobilisation of Dalits ever. The BSP's ability to turn adversity into opportunity has enabled the party to become the largest party in Western Uttar Pradesh, a position it has yet to cede. Migration has played a major role in this third wave as well. Kanshi Ram, the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), an important and successful vehicle for low-caste political assertion, emphasised the importance of urban migration as a catalyst for the politicisation of subaltern castes. This process involves an explicit appeal to caste identity among the poorest urban residents:

Those people who migrate in large numbers from their villages to big cities...take no possessions with them but only their caste. They leave behind their small huts, land and cattle etc. in the village and settle in the slums, near sewer and railway tracks with nothing else but their one and only position, i.e. their caste (Kanshi Ram cited in Narayan, 2011, 99).

For the Dalits of North India, the transformation of caste-based communities into political interest groups relied on educated urban middle classes working in conjunction with kinsfolk from the skilled working classes. This political process became effective only if Dalits gained sufficient economic independence to gain political agency. In the contemporary period, the Jatav community of Agra have established political agencies which double up as community associations, business organisations and trade unions for the community. The Jatav-led BSP has also reached out to similar organisations working on behalf of Backward Caste communities.

3.3. The Dalit Neighbourhood as the Crucible for Political Action 1978-2013

The Dalit movement's political strategy has involved connecting localised collective action with altering the balance of power through the state itself. The ethnically segregated neighbourhood is the basis for political action. Articulating claims to the city, claiming agency through migration, has been the manner in which the Dalit movement has been able to transform itself as a political force. The state government was captured through the ballot box in order to transform neighbourhood level

⁸⁴ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Private Residence, Agra, 18th November, 2013.

political arrangements. In the words of Arjun Savedia, himself a Dalit from an impoverished family, now a school teacher and an author:

The first step towards political action begins with your neighbour. Only your neighbour will listen to you.⁸⁵

The relationships and community ties that take shape in the urban neighbourhood provide the associational capacity for collective action. In the first instance, the ethnically segregated neighbourhood, whatever its shortcomings, provides safety and security away from the brutal social relations of the countryside.

The city has always been a refuge for Dalits seeking to escape the brutality of the countryside. The post-independence neighbourhoods of Chakkipat, Jagdishpura, Kazipada and Nagla Teen were formed by a pioneer of the Dalit movement who fought the village landlord and moved to the city. The Jatav community found jobs in the leather factories that produced boots and leather goods for the British. The Balmiki followed as Jatavs were willing to let the Balmiki live in the city. The Balmiki and the Jatav were the outcastes in the villages and the prejudice against them continues to this day. However, once the Jatavs moved to the city, they were able to establish themselves as an urban yeomanry. They found work as independent craftsmen as shoemakers, and some even became exporters.

The Jatavs were able to transform their social status from an untouchable or outcaste community into an intermediate community that emerged from decades of political struggle and reservations mandated by the Indian Constitution. This was a struggle that incorporated formal and informal means of participation in the formal structures of politics, as well as deep engagement with the informal structures of power.

The skills that the Jatav possessed as shoe-makers enabled the community to establish a foothold in the city and gain a measure of economic independence. RB Singh Yadav, the Agra Editor of the *Aaj* Newspaper and the general secretary of the Braj Kranti Dal, a breakaway faction of the Samajwadi Party explains:

The Jatav shoe-makers arrived in the city from before independence. However, the largest number of labourers and artisans arrived in the 1960s and the 1970s. They squatted on barren land, beside the railway tracks in Chakkipaath on the Gwalior Road and in the slum

⁸⁵ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Private Residence, Agra, 19th September, 2013.

areas around Kazipada. These new settlements were not planned or even authorised. Like any newcomers they would establish a connection and an address by bribing the linesman. They would then establish small shoe workshops there, and earn up to 100 rupees a day there – a considerable sum of money in those days.⁸⁶

The modest success of the Dalit community attracted the envy and resentment of other castes and communities who viewed these social changes with disquiet. The Jatavs would suffer repercussions for seeking to escape poverty and servility in the countryside. The Jatavs enjoyed the protective umbrella of the Republican Party of India and the Congress which later the coopted the Republican party's Dalit leadership. However, the Janata Party's electoral victory heralded a backlash against the modest economic niches of the Dalit migrants.

3.4. Rioting as a means of asserting power: The Kazipada Riots and beyond

In 1978, when the Jatav community of Agra launched a procession honouring Ambedkar, the Dalit founder of the Indian Constitution, and carried his icon across neighbourhoods and temples belonging to the city's upper-caste Hindu elite, this constituted a significant political statement. The procession reflected the advances the Dalit community had made over the past three decades since independence. The community was settled in Agra and had gained a modest degree of success in the leather industry. Moreover, a small intellectual elite had been emboldened by the Emergency, where the Central Government had worked hard to implement anti-Untouchability laws, and Land Reform programmes that benefited this historically marginalised community. The centralisation of the police force under the Emergency alongside the pro-Dalit policies engendered by the RPI's support of the Congress government at the Centre (Jaffrelot, 2015) enabled these leaders to seek redress from the constabulary and military police in a manner that was hitherto unprecedented. The procession was emblematic of the political agency that this community was asserting. It was asserting its right to the city, and the right to be free from harassment and untouchability.⁸⁷⁸⁸ Relations between the Jatavs and the elite castes of Agra took a turn for the worse in the same period. Here, the instigators of violence were the local upper castes and merchants who also deployed their connections with the local constabulary so as to repress the particularly assertive Jatavs of Agra.

The local urban elite saw their dominance over the city threatened by the Jatavs, who had resources and self-confidence to carry out Ambedkar *Jayanti* [anniversary] processions along the route of the

⁸⁶ Interview with RP Singh Yadav, Aaj Newspaper, Agra, 12th April, 2013.

⁸⁷ Interview with Pramod Maurya, Private Residence, Agra 14th April, 2013.

⁸⁸ Interview with Mukesh Kumar Balmiki, Private Residence, Ghaziabad, 21st September, 2013.

city's historical Ram Lila. Agra's Jatavs formed a vanguard for Dalit political assertion across India. They were led by lawyers and government officials who provided the ideological leadership through the Buddhist political ideology of Ambedkar, which promoted the Indian Constitution as a revolutionary means of dislodging the unequal structures of Hindu society. The procession went forward and was seen a deliberate provocation to the upper-caste Hindu elite of Agra. The Dalit community, which was officially now allowed to enter temples, defiantly marched in front of some of the most important temples in the city, deliberately asserting formal equality guaranteed by the Indian Constitution.

Arjun Savedia, an author working on this period of history, describes the resultant battle for urban space in Kazipada, Agra.

Our community had grown in confidence from the money we had made from making and selling shoes. In Kazipada, we honoured Dr Ambedkar took out processions in a manner that follows the celebrations carried out in honour of Ram. This angered the upper castes of the city, who attacked the procession. There were days of riots that followed. The police attacked us along with the upper castes and arrested our men. Ashok Kumar – whom we called the Tiger – was the first to fall victim to police violence. He was our first martyr.⁸⁹

This account chimes neatly with that of RB Singh Yadav, Agra editor of the Hindi broadsheet, *Aaj*:

Jatavs had come together and the famous Ram Baraat of Agra, which was patronised by the Bania, had its route usurped by the Jatavs who carried out their Ambedkar procession through the same route... This was a critical point in Jatav solidarity. 17 Jatavs were killed in this riot as Ambedkar Jayanti processions went in front of the Mankameshwar temple. Jatav unity gained a serious boost from this.⁹⁰

Pramod Maurya, an affluent Jatav leather exporter, describes the Dalit response:

We stayed calm on the 14th of April – it was Ambedkar's Birthday and we wanted to celebrate this peacefully. However, the next day when we took out a protest march, we were attacked by the local police. They say we started the stone throwing, but they

⁸⁹ Interview with Arjun Savedia Nagla Teen, Agra. 4th December, 2012.

⁹⁰ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, Editor, *Aaj* Newspaper, Dholpur Road, Agra. 25th November, 2012.

responded with live bullets and tear gas to attack the marchers...and people from the other castes joined the police in attacking us.⁹¹

What followed was a pitched battle between the Jatavs and the police. Unlike in the countryside, Agra provided the space for Dalit resistance, using a strikingly wide repertoire of actions. On one hand, there was violence. Arjun Savedia, a chronicler of the time, says the Agra incident was a critical turning point because it revealed that Agra's Jatavs were now empowered enough to fight back, to actively resist atrocities, and unlike in his grandfather's time, not just resort to the "weapons of the weak". Savedia explains how the "right to city" involved violence against extremely hostile agents of the local state:

Even though it was the Dalits who were attacked first, it was only Dalits who were arrested and beaten by the police. And their response to our protests was very violent, they fired into the crowds, and killed many people...yet we fought back...fighting back for a Dalit person is not easy, because for someone who lives on daily wages, his family eats at the day's end after he has earned some money. And people could not work for weeks...And when a Dalit man fell injured no one paid for his treatment, and there was no government compensation for the family of those killed. But we fought police. Our people used petrol bombs that drove them away from our neighbourhoods.

Alongside this violent response, middle-class Jatavs also adopted Gandhian means, courting arrest through a "Jail *bharo Andolan*" [mass agitation based on seeking arrest]. Pramod Maurya remembers:

...We went to the Thana and gave ourselves up for arrest...there wasn't enough room in the Thana for everyone...the police still kept attacking us, beating us...so we then killed a goat, and smeared its blood on clothes, and we sent these to New Delhi to Babu Jagjivan Ram, saying this was the blood of Dalits beaten by the police. Babuji ordered the army into Agra, and that's when the violence stopped, because once the soldiers came, they ensured that we were no longer attacked.⁹²

The elite of the city responded with violence. The police joined, attacking the Jatav community, resulting in pitched battles between the Jatavs of the city and local constabulary. The Jatavs eventually

⁹¹ Interview with Pramod Maurya, Founder and Proprietor, Maurya and Sons Traders LTD, Nagla Teen, Agra. 13th April, 2013.

⁹² Interview with Pramod Maurya and Arjun Savedia, Private Residence, Agra, 27th March, 2013.

succeeded in asserting their right to live and work in Agra only because of an intervention by the then Defense Minister, Jagjivan Ram, who sent the army to mediate.⁹³

The Jatav community's animosity and fear of the local state and their reliance on the Central authorities for the protection their basic rights confirms Ambedkar's wariness of the local state. The Bahujan Samaj Party also emphasises on the protective and transformational role of the national state (Pai, 2001). Unlike the local state, the national state is not embedded in the same hierarchies of power as local agents of the state. Jagjivan Ram's actions also played an important role in securing the Jatav community's right to the city, establishing a forerunner for later Jatav political mobilisation. Jatav political mobilisation was in many ways, a mobilisation prompted by the desire for survival. The Indian Constitution's right to freedom of movement, but for the Jatavs and indeed other marginalised communities, this right has never been guaranteed without mobilisation and group formation (Lynch, 1981).

Violence against the public rituals of Dalit communities is a commonplace phenomenon across India. In the countryside, Dalit communities have often no choice but to submit to such atrocities. In Agra city, as early as 1979, the Jatavs were sufficiently numerous and assertive to successfully resist efforts to suppress them. It is uncertain if Dalit politics would have achieved the successes it has today, if Dalits were not freed from the harshest disabilities imposed by the rural caste order. The city provides access to education, government jobs, and employment opportunities that reduce dependence on landed groups.

Urban migrants maintained close relations with their rural kinsfolk, and educated urban activists would return to their ancestral villages, and other villages near Agra to agitate on behalf of their poorer rural caste-fellows. Mr. Maurya, describes how the generation so vividly depicted by Owen Lynch (1969; 1981) used their education, and contacts in this manner.

During the Emergency, there was a police state, so the police followed orders from the Centre...and there was law and order...Dr Manek Chand led a campaign to the villages outside Agra where the Dalits weren't allowed to use the village well...they had to use a ditch of filthy water...Manek Chand went to drink from the well, but the villagers pleaded with him to stop. 'Sir we are scared they will beat us and burn our homes if you do that'. But Manek Chand and the city people with him told them, 'if they touch you come straight

⁹³ For a more in-depth account of the Kazipada riots, see Owen Lynch's article. "Rioting as rational action: an interpretation of the April 1978 riots in Agra". *ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY* XVI (48):1951-1956.

to us'. Some young people did then drink from the well. They burned their huts, so the villagers ran away to the city...Dr Manek Chand was not scared. He knew someone in the military police, and he went straight to town and called the police...the police came and set up a post for 6 months in the village. The Dalit villagers could use the well freely, and the Caste Hindus decided to go elsewhere because the well was now polluted...So Indiraji's Emergency helped us, as the Centre established a fair government and everyone had to pay heed. But it was Dr. Manek Chand who led the way, gave life to Ambedkar's message.⁹⁴

At a more quotidian level, urban migrants were also confident and affluent enough to alter power relations in the villages around Agra as well. After having been freed of the worst forms of caste discrimination, Dalit townsfolk refused to submit to them on trips to the countryside. Mr. Maurya recalls a trip back to a Yadav-dominated village, which is now part of the Agra urban area.

When I travelled to Barauli Aheer for my cousin's wedding, I stopped at the tea-stall. After I drank my tea, the Yadav stall owner ordered me to wash my glass...Now, I wasn't going to do that, so I gave him money for the glass, and then left the dirty glass at the stall itself...One month later, the same stallholder came to the city to buy ice in Kazipada. I recognised him immediately and grabbed him by the collar saying, 'you're in my neighbourhood now, what are you going to do?' He replied, 'but our score was settled in the village'. But he had no choice because all my neighbours were there, and he had to pay back the money I'd given him, and I slapped him...Every time, they would do something to our people in the villages, we'd retaliate in the city. Everyone from the village would need to come to the city at some point for business or government work. In this way, people in the villages got some protection from atrocities".⁹⁵

It is unclear the extent to which this story exaggerates the power of urban Jatavs, who despite their relative prosperity, remained an artisanal working class. Consequently, such efforts that were often based on the initiative of a few individuals would remain rather local in scale. Moreover, better-off communities in both urban and rural would have far greater access to the local state. However, as Tocqueville predicted, increased violence and conflict as one of the dangers of increased democratisation of social relations (Tocqueville, Bevan ed. 2003).

⁹⁴ Interview with Pramod Maurya, Private Residence, Agra, April 13th, 2013.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

3.5. The Panwari Massacre and the Third Wave of Dalit Assertion, 1989-2015

The attack and riots in Kazipada reflected upper-caste status anxiety in the heart of the city, and does point to a consolidation of the Jatavs as political community, within the city limits. However, the brutal violence witnessed in the village of Panwari in 1989 also reflects the gradual and partial nature of Dalit assertion, even in villages just outside Agra. At the same time, the brutal response to Dalit assertion appears to indicate a greater sense of threat from landed groups, whose social dominance in the countryside had provided the region with very powerful *Kisan* politicians. It also reflects the importance of other sources of livelihood outside the village in propelling Dalit assertion. As in Kazipada, one decade earlier, the spark for the violence centred on conflicts over symbolism. Shailendra Singh explains:

Panawari is a village outside Agra, on the road to Delhi. In 1989, a soldier in the army returned home to organise his son's wedding. Now a soldier, who fights for his country, is never going to bow before anyone. He knew that the Jat farmers would never countenance his son arriving on a horse, but he decided to defy them in style. He hired an elephant. His son rode in on an elephant and the father sat beside him with his army rifle loaded...The Jats would not be quiet about this. As soon as the wedding procession entered the village, the Jats set upon them – they shot at the wedding procession....Can you imagine, on his son's wedding day, that father saw his son shot dead before his eyes? That was it! All of Agra burned that day. Everyone we knew retaliated, and curfew had to be imposed across the city. Even though Jatavs were thrown into brick kilns, we fought back, and we came together like never before. Our community got united and now our baraats are never stopped, we ride on horses like everyone else...The soldier was not martyred for his country but he made the ultimate sacrifice for his people- and their dignity.⁹⁶

According to RP Singh Yadav:

The Panwari massacre was the critical turning point in Agra's political history. Jatavs were expelled and attacked from villages all around Agra, and they fled to the city in mass numbers. They also came together to vote for the BSP, abandoning the Congress for good. The BJP won a few times in the early 1990s, but since the mid-1990s the Jatavs came together and made sure that the BSP always wins most seats at the state level. The urban

⁹⁶ Interview with Shailendra Singh, Shalimar Bagh, Tajganj, Agra, 12th April, 2013.

migration of Jatavs turned into a real flood in 1989, and turned the city from an Aggarwal dominated city to a Jatav dominated city.⁹⁷

Political mobilisation among Dalits appears to have been sparked in the first instance as a means of survival. Without the power to influence the political system, and gain control of the state, Dalits appeared very much as the receiving end of marginalisation and violent reprisals.

There are remarkable parallels between the anti-Dalit pogroms and the riots in Kazipada and Panwari. Both incidents are separated by a decade. However, both occurred at a time of political instability associated with the breakdown of Congress dominance in Uttar Pradesh. In 1978, the violence in Kazipada occurred under the administration of Chief Minister Ram Naresh Yadav, who assumed power following the Congress party's rout in Uttar Pradesh in 1977. Under the brief yet nationwide suspension of democracy under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Dalits were provided unprecedented levels of police protection in rural and urban Agra. Landless Dalits were given plots of land and anti-untouchability laws were effectively implemented for the first time since Indian independence. The BSP government appears to have emulated Emergency-era policing strategies, as both Indira Gandhi's Congress governments (UP's Congress state Chief Ministers were effectively proxies for central government rule) and Mayawati's BSP administration enforced formal bureaucratic hierarchies.

Collusive local networks between dominant landed groups, urban merchants and the lower bureaucracy were replaced by administrations which reinforced the power of District Magistrates, senior line managers and police chiefs across urban Uttar Pradesh.⁹⁸ These measures protected Dalits from endemic persecution. These gains were reversed by landed communities under Ram Naresh Yadav's Janata government (Singh, 1992). Nonetheless, the political gains during the Emergency increased Dalit confidence, which outlasted the Congress government. The violent backlashes at Kazipada reflected the dormant resentments of upper-caste and dominant-caste elites, whose entrenched networks with the local constabulary were reactivated in wake of the Congress's electoral defeat. They sought to use these local networks to reverse the civic and political rights Dalits had come to enjoy. Land, which was redistributed to Dalits, was snatched back in the countryside and Dalits were systematically attacked in the countryside. Nonetheless, Agra's increasingly self-confident Jatavs combined localised resistance with appeals to central government authority.

⁹⁷ Interview with RP Singh Yadav, *Aaj* Newspaper Office, Agra, April 22nd 2013.

⁹⁸ Interview with Pramod Maurya, Agra, 16th April, 2013.

A decade later, the violence in Panwari also motivated dominant-caste resentment against Dalit assertion. The Congress government's authority was once again waning in Uttar Pradesh. Dalit prosperity and Buddhist assertion had spread beyond Agra's city centre into villages at the edge of the city. In 1989, Agra's Jatavs had made sufficient gains to prevent serious violence in the city. However, landless rural Jatavs suffered the most egregious persecution resulting in their expulsion from villages across Agra and even in neighbouring districts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The decline of the Congress Party (itself responsible for the decline of the Republican Party of India a decade earlier) provided a platform for the BSP to emerge as the foremost protector of Dalit interests in the city.

Urban migration remains the single most important catalyst for the successful emergence of Dalit politics, as it freed the Dalit poor from servile relations with dominant landed castes. Urban Dalit communities provided relative safety, strength in numbers, and access to commercial networks. Agra's urban neighbourhoods also exposed new migrants to the ideas educated Dalits and provided new recruits for the Dalit Buddhist movement. If the events at Kazipada and Panwari reflected the continued brutality of castes, they also reflected some of the important turning points in Dalit political history.

The Panwari riots, in particular reflected the emergence of Jatavs as self-confident political agents unwilling to accept the repression, lynching and the violence of the past. The BSP's leadership, who had formed political party only five years earlier, were quick to fashion a political response to these social dynamics. The BSP's political entrepreneurship was rapidly rewarded by the working-class electorate. The BSP mobilised new waves of urban refugees, and exploited the grievances of educated Dalits through the rare promise of political independence and firm conviction in the power of the ballot box. However, it took another seven years before the Dalit party could translate these social changes into electoral victories. Nonetheless, between 1996 and 2007, the BSP increased its tally of legislators in the city from one to seven. In the 2012 elections, the BSP held onto all its seven assembly segments from Agra.

This period coincided with rapid increases in Agra's population, which increased by over 40% in the decade between 1991 and 2001 (Census of India, 2001). This was twice the population increase as compared to the decade between 1981 and 1991 (Census of India, 1991). The city's population increased by 21% in the decade between 2001 and 2011 (Census of India, 2011). The rapid population increase between 1991 and 2001, when the BSP consolidated its political power in the city, appears

to reflect the Dalit exodus to the city. The total Scheduled Caste population of the city now stands at 21% (Census of India, 2011).

The party has retained this advantage and gradually eroded the dominance of the city's Oswal Jain and Aggarwal elite. These political shifts are also reflected in the composition of the Agra Municipal Corporation and the District Councils (*Zila Panchayat*).

The BSP emerged as the second largest party in the city's Municipal Corporation, following civic elections in 2012. The party did not contest the urban local body polls but supported independents, and in the process, 25 Municipal councillors supported by the BSP emerged victorious.⁹⁹ The BJP remained the largest party with electoral victories in 36 wards. The BJP also won the mayoral elections with a slender margin, as the BJP's candidate defeated the BSP's candidate by 5,000 votes.¹⁰⁰ Despite this, the BJP has to accommodate Dalits into its local power structures in order to remain electorally viable.

Consequently, the BSP's politics of Dalit assertion has had significant consequences for Dalit assertion across the city's political terrain. Moreover, in the recently concluded District Council elections, the BSP emerged as the single largest party. In the 2015 elections, the BSP obtained 21 seats in the 51-seat Agra district council as compared to the nine seats won by the Samajwadi Party and the seven obtained by the BJP. True to the historical development of urban Agra, the Dalit party has emerged as the single largest party in the urban agglomeration and as runner-up in a primary city with a long history of elite dominance.¹⁰¹

3.6. The Third Wave of Dalit Assertion from the ground up: The Neighbourhood of Nagla Teen. 1989-2013

The secondary city is the subaltern city. This city is home to those communities who remain excluded from the ranks of the traditional elites. However, their presence is equally essential for they provide the essential services which maintain the lifestyles of the elite. The artisans, skilled craftsmen, small farmers and sanitation workers who live in this city provide the services for the elite even as they are deliberately excluded from enjoying the amenities and participating in the networks of the

⁹⁹ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, Aaj Newspaper, Agra, 28th March, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Anil Rampuria, Agra, 24th September, 2013.

¹⁰¹ *The Economic Times*. "In Agra region, good news for the BSP". 3rd November, 2015.

primary city. The secondary city, is also home to the majority of its inhabitants, and is internally divided into residential clusters based on caste, religion and occupation.

The Taj Mahal and the adjoining neighbourhood of Tajganj form the historical edge of the primary city of Agra. The Lodha and Jatav neighbourhoods adjacent to the Taj Protected Forest mark the beginning of the secondary city. These communities supply the adjacent luxury hotel resorts with skilled labour in hospitality and construction. They also supply produce from their market gardens, and urban farms. The demographics of the wards of the city around the Taj Mahal provide an interesting snapshot of caste-based segregation in contemporary Agra. The neighbourhood of Tajganj is located at the southern entrance of the Taj. Vaishya and Jain landlords own the majority of the four- and five-star hotels and boutiques in this neighbourhood, while Muslims own the majority of the cyber cafes and budget hostels frequented by foreign backpackers. They also provide ancillary services to the Vaishya hotel and boutique owners. The Muslim dominance of light transport and the workshops are vital for the streamlined operation of the city's hotels and boutiques. The Muslims have also benefited considerably from the upsurge in Yadav hoteliers and boutique owners who have acquired businesses here since the later 1990s, and provided a new market for the Muslim business community's services.

Another Backward community, the Telis, have also gained considerable social mobility in the contemporary period, and their monopoly over the oil presses in the city has provided this community with the economic assets necessary to provide the personnel to the local units of the BJP. Their neighbourhood is commonly known as Telipada. Telipada forms the edge of the historical city of Agra, following which the secondary city begins. The Telis are ritually OBC but they claim Rajput status and have made considerable fortunes as oil vendors. Their dominance of the city's oil presses have enabled this community to obtain significant social mobility. They have become middle class. The Telis are placed in a similar ritual position as the Lodhas, a community of BC market gardeners and traders.

The Lodhas have gained considerable prosperity as market gardeners, fruit and vegetable wholesale merchants, supplying the tourism and hospitality industry sustained by the presence of the Taj Mahal. The Lodhas are also loyal BJP voters, and have also benefited considerably from the advent of mass tourism. Lodhas have gained lucrative contracts supplying the largest hotels with fresh produce from their market gardens, and have employment as supervisors and cashiers. Their neighbourhood of Deem Ka Nagla has established itself as rival to the Jat village in terms of prominence. The Lodhas are now in position of dominance as they patronise the local temple dedicated to the Mother Goddess,

which is open to all castes and communities. They also have a measure of political dominance following the election of Mohan Singh Lodha, who is the Ward Corporator for the Dhandupura ward in South East Agra.

The Lodhas also provide patronage to poorer OBC communities such as Chaurassiyas, Kumhaars and Nais. These artisanal communities have moved to the city as their hereditary rural occupations have been rendered obsolete. Nonetheless, their inherited physical and human capital have enabled them to prosper in the urban service economy. The Chaurassiya work selling Paan, tobacco, mobile phone top-ups, and repairing auto-rickshaws. The Nais work as hairdressers and the Kumhaars work as bricklayers in the construction industry. These communities are all higher in the ritual hierarchy than the Dalits, even if they have not benefited from affirmative action and political agency which has been monopolised by wealthier OBC communities. Consequently, they have emerged as important swing voters, whose support is coveted by both the BSP and the BJP. These communities remain receptive and even supportive to the BSP's political agenda because their social and economic interests converge with those of the Jatavs. They also live in close proximity to them as wealthier Lodhas increasingly choose to move out of their old neighbourhoods and rent their properties out to tenants from non-dominant communities who then must live next to the much larger Jatav settlement of Nagla Teen.

The Nagla Teen settlement lies at the edge of the Taj Protected Forest. The boundaries between the primary city and the secondary city have been greatly blurred since the mid-2000s. The construction of hotels and roads under the BSP government in the vicinity of the Taj altered land-use patterns so that gated communities and luxury resorts are situated adjacent to the Taj Protected Forest. This also places these major employers within an easy community of the older Jatav and Lodha settlements at the edge of the Taj Protected Forest.

The strategic location of the neighbourhood at the edge of the Taj enabled the local residents to benefit from the rapid expansion in the hospitality industry in the mid-2000s. The residents of Nagla Teen and Balmikipada have been able to take advantage of employment opportunities in the hospitality industry. The Jatavs settled on barren land at the edge of the hereditary estates of the Rajput landowners of Dhandupura. The Jatavs also dominate the neighbourhood of Nagla Teen at the edge of the Taj Protected Forest neighbourhood, which is located on the eastern edge of the Taj Mahal. Their neighbourhood was initially barren land, unwanted by the hereditary landlords. The Jats, who emerged as the largest landlords in the district following land reforms, were equally uninterested in cultivating this barren land, and this benign neglect enabled the Jatav neighbourhood to grow in size

to include 10,000 Jatav and 2,000 Balmiki families. They have found jobs as security guards, chefs, waiters, kitchen staff, groundsmen and shop-keepers in the new tourist complexes that have emerged with the creation of luxury hotels at this entrance to the Taj. The Jatavs in particular have benefited from economic expansion and have also found jobs as government employees, working for the Forest Department as Park Rangers, Tour Guides and small vendors at the tourist attractions set up beside the forbidden core of the Taj protected forest.

The Jatavs have been patrons of the Balmiki for two decades. The Jatavs invited the Balmiki to settle beside their neighbourhoods in order to avail of their services as sanitation workers, domestic help and midwives. The Balmiki used this patronage to gain an urban foothold and offer their employment to other communities in the city centre. This is also true for the Mewati Muslims who specialise in gemstones, handicrafts and utensils aimed at the domestic and international tourist market. The Qureshi Muslims, on the other hand, provide meat and leather for the Leather Manufacturing and Export industries, but also live adjacent to other Muslims and Jatavs in the city. The Mewatis are a community of low-caste Muslims who, like the Qureshis, rely on Jatavs to provide the skilled labour in their commercial enterprise.

The Jatavs are also sufficiently numerous to provide the Muslim community protection from violent pogroms, which are usually orchestrated by the Jats of Dhandupura. However, under the Samajwadi Party, the Yadavs are given priority by the local bureaucracy in a manner that enables them to challenge the social dominance of powerful Jat and Rajput landlords. While the Jat and Rajput landlords have been the historical oppressors of the Dalits in western Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party and the Yadav community have sought to avoid direct confrontation with the Jatavs. The Jatav-dominated BSP first assumed political power through an electoral alliance with the Samajwadi Party. Moreover, the Samajwadi Party has even provided significant opportunities for upward mobility to the Jatav community. It has enabled the establishment of powerful Jatav patrons within the party's open-elite system. One such important patron, Chaudhary Ramadheer Singh, is in the Samajwadi Party where his Yadav associates provide him with the access necessary to invest in property and this gentleman is effectively the author of the urban development of Dhandupura village.

The neighbourhood is where the relationships based on economic exchange, residence and political patron-client relationships come alive. The creation of the Dalit neighbourhood and its improvement as well as the increased co-operation between Dalits and other social groups indicates the emergence of new forms of social democracy in the Indian context. The Dalit community has always been better placed in Agra's social hierarchy than it is anywhere else in India. Between 2007 and 2013, there has

been a rapid shift in the position of Jatavs in local power hierarchies. The BSP's electoral success in the city and in the state of Uttar Pradesh has transformed the socio-economic status of the Jatav community from struggling subaltern migrants to an established elite group which is well-represented in the senior-most hierarchies of the local bureaucracy. The Jatav middle class in particular has benefited considerably from a pro-Dalit state government.

To illustrate how this complex of relationships works on the ground, we can consider the instance of Nagla Teen. This is a ward where the Jatavs are the single largest community, followed by members of landed but ritually "backward" communities, including Jats, Lodhas as well as communities who are now classed as Most Backward, including Kumhars, Nishadas, and Chaurasias. There also 200 Balmiki families here. A shoe factory workshop, which also doubles up as a makeshift political office, is run by the local BSP ward leader, Manish Bhaironath. A gathering of six young men explained how local social relations changed dramatically following regime change in Lucknow. According to Guddu, the son of a prosperous leather factory owner, relations between Jatavs and dominant landed groups changed dramatically after the BSP came to power:

Things were very tough for us earlier as they would not lose any opportunity to put us down. If our goats or sheep grazed on their land, they would kill them straightaway. If we annoyed Jats in anyway, they would parade people naked in public. This happened even ten years ago. But then in 2007, everything changed because the BSP came to power, because now the police began registering cases against violence, and they had to... Earlier they would not do anything, but now they would be suspended for 6 months, or even sacked if they did not act.¹⁰²

The changed social status for the Jatav community had other practical advantages. They routinely spoke about how now that the BSP had come to power, it was "our government" (*Hamari Sarkar hai*).¹⁰³ The Jatav community now had privileged access to the state, obtaining licenses, ration cards, identity documents with much greater ease than before. This was aided by the BSP government's policy of posting sympathetic bureaucrats in key positions, who would ensure state resources were provided towards Jatav neighbourhoods. As Manoj Kumar, a Block Development Officer, observed:

We have lived in this part of town since the 1950s. Yet our inability to win power at the Municipal Corporation meant that we did not receive any amenities. Street lights,

¹⁰² Interview with Dharmendra Singh, Agra, 6th January, 2013.

¹⁰³ Interview with Mohan Singh, Agra, 15th May, 2013.

pavements, and other amenities are systematically provided only to BJP voters in the city centre and the posh colonies in the suburbs. This neighbourhood received street lights, paved roads and other basic infrastructure only in the past five years. Dalit neighbourhoods are not catered for because the elite does not care about them.¹⁰⁴

Whenever the BSP loses control of the Uttar Pradesh state government, it reverts to a reliance on informal arrangements between Dalit bureaucrats, powerful BSP politicians and the wider Dalit community in order to protect the gains accrued to its core constituency in the period that the state was under its rule. This is a particularly important aspect of Dalit politics. These networks protect working-class communities who are otherwise vulnerable to retaliation from hostile non-Dalit communities. Dushyant Maurya, a wealthy exporter narrates an incident from the year 2000, when Jat political leaders sought to intimidate the Jatav community in the run up to local municipal elections. It fell upon him to protect his neighbourhood from the landowners' wrath:

The Jats were armed and had summoned enough strongmen to be able to surround our neighbourhood and were ready to come to beat us up to make sure we did not vote against the local BJP candidate. We had connections with the Jatav community who were in the Provincial Armed Constabulary, who sent out an entire battalion to protect our neighbourhood. Our neighbourhood became a fortress with police picket lines blocking all the entrances and exits to our neighbourhood. The Jat strongmen were cowed by the presence of uniform, and we knew that we no longer had anything to fear. The power of strongmen had gone forever. The community still owes me because just with a few phone calls we were able to summon officers to provide us protection.¹⁰⁵

Poorer Dalits look to affluent and better-educated neighbours for inspiration and leadership on behalf of the entire community.

Experience from fieldwork indicates that once Dalits gain secure government employment or obtain a degree of affluence and economic security, they are expected to provide social assistance to their kinsfolk, in a manner that mitigates class differences within the community.¹⁰⁶ This strategy has proven to be an essential fallback option for the BSP's urban regimes in Agra as the party lost power in 2012. The recruitment of 88,000 school teachers, 35,000 police officers and 100,000 Sanitation Workers "over and above the normal recruitment process" (Sharma, 2011, 1) has deepened and

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Manoj Kumar Singh, Block Development Officer, Nagla Teen, 15th September, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Dushyant Singh Maurya, Private Residence, Dhandupura, Agra, 4th April, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with E. Siddharth Rao, Café Coffee Day, Khan Market, New Delhi, 5th January, 2013.

broadened the access that working-class Dalits enjoy to the state. Arjun Savedia, himself from an impoverished Dalit family, is one employee who benefited from this process. He narrates his life story as being one of experiencing constant barriers to social mobility imposed by caste discrimination and poverty. According to him:

I could never get a permanent job as lecturer despite years of teaching experience. I did not have the money needed to pay a bribe to get a post. Nor did I have the contacts. However, once the BSP came to power, we were recruited as school teachers and we did not have to pay a single bribe. I was selected by a recruitment board where a Yadav was the Chair, and a Jatav was the deputy. However, the job was gained through the blessings of Ms. Mayawati.¹⁰⁷

Mr. Savedia has also worked hard to get his poor relations loans in times of financial hardship. As he explains:

My older brother could not study. He was not qualified to gain a government job. Consequently, he continues his work as shoe-maker. Now the BSP government is no longer in power, the loans, free electricity and subsidies have all ended. His business has ended. Consequently, I have had to deploy my connections with Dalit officers in the nationalised banks to obtain a loan for my brother. I was able to obtain a loan of 500,000 rupees which he has used to construct three new apartments in our family house. He can now earn a stable income by renting these apartments out.¹⁰⁸

As MN Srinivas observes,

Villagers want their young men to be educated and officers in the government. As officers they are expected to help their kinsfolk, caste folk and co-villagers (Srinivas, 1959, 1).

Srinivas defines this form of social dominance as “Western”. This is because it is ritually detached from the status hierarchy of the caste system. White-collar employment also provides wealth and status that is independent of traditional sources of power and wealth derived from landownership.

3.7. From Subaltern to Elite: Jatav Assertion in the Contemporary Period, 2007-2009

In Agra, Dalit politics in Agra has deployed a mixture of patronage and programmatic linkages in order to deliver welfare benefits for its core constituency while also reaching out to swing voters

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Private Home, Nagla Teen, Agra, 31st May, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Dhandupura, Agra, 3rd August, 2013.

from social groups historically opposed to Dalit assertion. Previous scholarship has already observed that in its latest tenure the BSP's progress in delivering housing security has been "very impressive" (Pai, 2009, 1). The BSP government launched three urban housing schemes, two of which involved the construction of purpose-built social housing complexes in urban areas, while the third guaranteed urban migrants housing tenure on the land on which they had hitherto been squatters, while also financing home improvements in urban squatter colonies. This scheme transformed illegally settled urban slums into legitimate neighbourhoods, thereby transforming the status of urban squatters to that of documented urban citizens.

Sohini Guha's thesis uncovers the manner in which "the BSP moved from courting subordinate castes to courting dominant castes, while retaining the support of the former..." (Guha, 2011, 2). The BSP ability to sustain this disparate class and caste coalition depended on two key political contingencies:

The original base's willingness to *forgo* patronage and co-ethnic representations, and accept other benefits in return; and the party's reconstitution of its representative ethos, whereby it undertakes to deliver *different* sets of benefits to different caste groups, namely, programmatic benefits to its subaltern base, and patronage and co-ethnic representation to its new non-subaltern constituencies (Ibid., 2-3).

This multi-ethnic transformation resulted in the creation of an urban political machine constituted of senior bureaucrats, the majority of Agra's MLAs, BSP's party workers, the Jatav commercial elite and their non-Jatav clients, as well as non-Jatav patrons and their clients. The maintenance of the bonds of loyalty and deference exhibited by clients towards the senior patron forms the basic relational unit of any urban machine. Additionally, brokers and political agents working as part of the BSP's urban regime were charged with delivering programmatic benefits to the party's original base. This refers to "gains flowing from the flawless implementation of constitutionally enshrined quotas" (reservation of jobs in the state administration and public sector and seats in state-funded educational institutions made available for Scheduled Castes) (Guha, 2011, 3).

3.8. The Sociology of the BSP's *Sarvajan* Transformation

Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari (2000) argue that complex local political alliances are tied up with the local political economy centred on the exchange and use value of land and real estate. This chimes with the empirical data gathered for this thesis. The BSP's accommodation of non-Dalit political entrepreneurs appears to reflect an understanding of the material realities of power in both Agra and Ghaziabad. From the early 2000s onwards, the BSP underwent what Sohini Guha describes

as a multi-ethnic transformation (Guha, 2011). Sudha Pai describes this as the BSP's *Sarvajan* phase. In Agra the BSP has been able to rely on Jatav economic elites to further its political agenda. The BSP's political elites in the city reflect the strength of the Jatav community which has emerged out of a long history of political agitation and economic independence in the city.

Three of the six BSP legislators in the city are from the Jatav community. Dr. Dharampal Singh, an academic from a landowning Jatav family is well-respected amongst the city's elite. His academic connections provide the necessary cultural capital to access the city's elite, especially the bureaucracy, where his learning and qualifications are well-respected. Consequently, he is an independent and influential political actor who enjoys considerable respect amongst his working-class constituents. His Etmadpur constituency is the location of major Public Private Partnerships associated with the Yamuna Expressway. The Agra Outer Ring Road and real estate developments controlled by the expansive Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development authority are located here. Dr Dharampal's cultural capital, and political connections makes him a valued member of Agra's elite. They relied on his expertise and connections with senior officials and engineers in the Agra Development Authority and the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, in order to invest in land and real estate affected by the state government's pro-business agenda between 2007 and 2012. His associates were also responsible for ensuring jobs for working-class Jatavs on the public infrastructure projects in his constituency. He retains close connections with the city's Yadav political entrepreneurs, which enables co-operation under the Samajwadi Party state government.

Gutyari Lal Duvesh, the Jatav legislator from the Agra Cantonment, benefits from representing the most central constituency in Agra. His constituents include Jatavs, Backward Castes, Muslims, and traditional upper-caste elites. Gutyari Lal Duvesh is a businessman associated with the leather industry, and is engaged in the export of leather and shoe manufacturing. His long-standing association with a constituency with some of the most valuable real estate in the city marks him as one of the most influential politicians in the city. Jatavs, Muslims and even Brahmins benefit from his patronage. Pandit Bhagwandas Sharma is one such client. Sharma, who runs a restaurant for Muslims, Kushwahas and Jatavs in the Sultanpura market provides loans, and access to government officials for his clients. Mr Gutyari Lal Duvesh enjoys close connections with Zulfiqar Bhutto, a Muslim politician also associated with the BSP. Bhutto, the erstwhile MLA for Agra Cantonment, is one of the largest meat exporters and leather goods manufactures in the city.

The Jatavs rely on the Muslims for access to lucrative export markets in West Asia, and the Qureshi Muslims, in turn, rely on Jatavs for access to state officials. Muslims lack kinship ties with the local

state, as they are poorly represented in the local bureaucracy. This in contrast to Jatavs, who are well represented government employment. Nonetheless, the Jatav community relies on Qureshis to supply raw materials, finance and market access, as the Muslim community is able to take advantage of economies of scale and trade links with West Asia and East Africa. Jatavs and Muslims are also associated in the manufacture, sale and transport of auto-rickshaws. Muslims also rely on Jatav political leaders for protection and tolerance, as the community fear assault from Hindu nationalists. Zulfikar Bhutto and Gutiyari Lal Duvess has joint stakes in major abattoirs and leather-processing units in Etmadpur, Dr. Dharampal's constituency. Connections with the local MLA were necessary to enable these BSP politicians to acquire land and the necessary licenses to establish this business. In return, Jatavs were provided employment in these enterprise.

Chaudhari Basheer, an erstwhile BSP MLA who started his political career as a taxi driver, has major stakes in the leather industry. He has emerged in recent years as the representative of Muslims in the transport industry. Kali Charan Suman, a property dealer and dairy owner, is the Jatav MLA for the Agra rural Constituency. He relied on Chaudhary Basheer to access finance and the economic networks associated with Muslim entrepreneurs in the leather industry. The Jatav-Muslim alliances represent a symbiotic relationship that runs in parallel to more elite economic networks in Agra. The Muslim community provides financial capital, while the Jatavs provide access to state officials. Both communities experience exclusion from the upper-caste and wealthy dominant-caste networks in the city. The BSP relies on backward-caste entrepreneurs from the Nishad and Kushwaha communities in order to win the support of backward castes in the city.

The Kushwaha are hereditary market-gardeners. The community's market gardens have provided considerable prosperity as the urban economy of the city has expanded. However, unlike the BJP-voting Lodhas, the Kushwaha are loyal to the BSP. Bhagwan Singh Kushwaha remains the community's main patron. His peri-urban constituency of Kheragarh is the site of Kushwaha entrepreneurs, whose market gardens and small enterprises provide urban residents with fresh vegetables. He owns agricultural land and has benefitted from urban development and real estate development on Agra's periphery. Chotelal Verma, is another backward caste MLA. He is from the Nishad caste of hereditary boatmen, a community historically associated with the Yamuna river. A petrol pump owner and real estate developer, Chotelal Verma is instrumental in ensuring Nishad votes for the BSP. His business involves close connections with the local state, including police officers, as well as officials in state-owned oil companies.

The BSP relies on Rajput political entrepreneurs and activists to access lucrative commercial networks in Agra. Members of the city's traditional elite, Suraj Pal Singh and Jitendra Raghuvanshi are important political entrepreneurs in the city. Suraj Pal Singh is an academic who enjoys close ties with the traditional elites of Agra, and enjoys considerable influence amongst the bureaucracy. The BSP, like the Republican Party of India before it, relies on such upper-caste, outside leaders to provide access and economic resources for less established Dalit political actors (Lynch, 1969). Jitendra Raghuvanshi is another important political activist accommodated by the BSP. He started his political career in the city's Communist Party of India (CPI) branch but switched to the BSP in the early 2000s. Alongside his elite status, which provides a pass-key to the city's bureaucracy and established elite, Raghuvanshi is a renowned cadre organiser and respected social worker. His entry into the BSP benefited him economically as he was able to establish hotels to capitalise on the city. Both Suraj Pal Singh and Jitendra Raghuvanshi are closely associated with Dr. Dharampal Singh, as they share a long-standing associations with the college lecturer.

As this brief summary of legislators indicates, urban political power involves complex alliances between political actors and commercial elites. Commercial actors must nurture contacts with government and political elites, whilst political actors use their discretionary powers and influence over the bureaucracy to enter into commercial activity. These local-level alliances are shaped by access and contacts with state-level politicians and bureaucrats, who possess the ultimate discretion with regard to the appointment of officials at the level of the urban district and urban development authorities. District Magistrates have the ultimate power to license commercial activity in any given urban setting and consequently work in tandem with local business groups.

The role of political intermediaries, which includes social activists, journalists and even academics is to provide inside information on which bureaucrats enjoy favour with the state government, and which government departments are the most effective in facilitating projects. They also provide connections to the relevant bureaucrats charged with implementing policies and projects conceived by senior state-level politicians. The state government has the power to conceive of urban development projects, the ability to form agreements with large private corporations, and the ability to release funds for projects relevant to its own political priorities. Nonetheless, the state government relies on bureaucrats and political elites with local connections to actually implement these projects in a manner that benefits the allies of the party at the helm of state power. The BSP relied on Dalit officers and engineers in the bureaucracy to implement policies that provided civic amenities to Dalit

neighbourhoods, and provided contracts and tenders to upper caste and dominant caste allies of the party in both cities.

In Agra, the BSP provided tenders and contracts to Dalits, especially in the construction and leather industries. However, even in Agra, the state government and Dalit political actors relied on Vaishya, Panjabi Khatri and Muslims to implement crucial urban development projects. These communities' possession of the start-up capital and the connections with the bureaucracy and commercial suppliers. They were valuable and necessary allies of the city's Jatav political elite.

Moreover, Agra's Jatavs have also benefited from the community's success in obtaining government employment. Jatavs now form the second largest caste group in the Uttar Pradesh institutions of authority, including judges at the High Court, police chiefs and District Magistrates, as well as in the lower bureaucracy.¹⁰⁹ These changes have profound implications for the community's ability to access the state, and control power networks. This is particularly the case for Agra, where the presence of Jatavs in the bureaucracy is matched by Jatav political elites, and businessmen. Affluent Jatavs have achieved the status of an intermediate elite group in Taj City.

3.9. Consolidating Power through Programmatic Politics: The BSP's Affordable Housing and Integrated Neighbourhood Development Schemes

In Agra, Dalit politics in Agra has deployed a mixture of patronage and programmatic linkages in order to deliver welfare benefits for its core constituency while also reaching out to swing voters from social groups historically opposed to Dalit assertion. Previous scholarship has already observed that in its latest tenure the BSP's progress in delivering housing security has been "very impressive" (Pai, 2009, 1).

The BSP government launched three urban housing schemes, two of which involved the construction of purpose-built social housing complexes in urban areas, while the third guaranteed urban migrants housing tenure on the land on which they had hitherto been squatters, while also financing home improvements in urban squatter colonies. This scheme transformed illegally settled urban slums into legitimate neighbourhoods, thereby transforming the status of urban squatters to that of documented urban citizens.

The most contemporary census figures indicate the extent to which Dalits in Agra have been able to escape destitution and poverty in the city. The Census of India, 2011 testifies to the relative prosperity of the city's inhabitants. The overwhelming majority of Agra's residents, 91.14%, live in permanent

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Christophe Jaffrelot, London, 17th September, 2012.

dwelling constructed out of bricks and concrete rather than makeshift shelters with mud huts and thatched roofs (Census of India, 2011, 102). Moreover, the overwhelming majority of Agra's residents live in houses whose quality of construction and interiors are good or livable (Census of India, 2011, 109). In Agra, 50.57% of all houses were classified as "good" by census enumerators, whilst 46.29% of houses were classified as livable. This is significantly above the state average for Uttar Pradesh, where only 42.84% of houses were classified as good. Moreover, 93% of all homes in Agra are owner-occupied rather than rented (Census of India, 2011, 110). This figure is another important indicator of housing security.

Agra also has the highest levels of access to electricity in the entire state of Uttar Pradesh. India's 2011 census records Agra as recording the best figures for electrification in all of Uttar Pradesh. According to the *Atlas on Houses, Household Amenities and Assets (Uttar Pradesh)*, 93% of urban Agra households used electricity as their main source of lighting. There has also been a sharp increase in electrification since the last census, as the number of electrified houses increased by 25 percentage points over the decade (Census of India, 2011, 115). Agra was also the first city in Uttar Pradesh where the entire electricity distribution network was privatised. Whilst this ensured an increase in the unit rates of electricity; the measure also guaranteed the regularised provision of electricity, rather than its contingent provision through political intermediaries with connections to the linesmen.¹¹⁰ Shadav Saxena, a sales operative from Agra, supported the move arguing, that metered payments ensured a better service with fewer power cuts than before¹¹¹.

Research by Brian Min would suggest that this may be directly linked to the Bahujan Samaj Party administration. Min uses satellite imagery of the earth to study rural electrification patterns in Uttar Pradesh. His study leads him to the following conclusion:

Elections have a significant and visible effect on the distribution of electricity to villages where most poor reside. Using annual data from 1992 to 2003, I demonstrate that the probability a village gets electricity is higher in constituencies represented by the low-Caste BSP party. I also find a positive BSP treatment effect in a more limited test using matching techniques to evaluate similar villages that differ only on whether they switched to BSP representation in the critical 2002 elections. The findings contradict an influential

¹¹⁰ Interview with Dushyant Maurya, Agra, 8th April 2013.

¹¹¹ Interview with Shadav Saxena, Agra, 17th April, 2013.

conventional wisdom that who the poor vote for in India makes little difference to their welfare (Min, 2009, 34).

Affordable housing projects and integrated slum development were at the heart of the BSP state government's programmatic agenda for the urban poor. Specifically, the BSP created three new policies for poor urban migrants, namely,

- i. The Kanshi Ram Shaheri Gareeb Aawaas Yojana (Affordable Housing Programme)
- ii. The Kanshi Ram Samagra Vikas Yojana (Integrated Neighbourhood Development Scheme)
- iii. The Sarvajan Hitay Malikana Haq Yojana (Scheme providing security of tenure to unauthorised neighbourhoods).¹¹²

The BSP government took it upon itself to relocate slum-dwellers from shanty-towns into purpose-built "Kanshi Ram colonies" which provided two-bedroom apartments, free piped water obtained through an independent water supply, electricity, co-operative supermarkets, child-care facilities, as well as security and maintenance services provided by the municipal corporation.¹¹³

The provision of housing security is extremely important for the urban poor, and combats the systemic exclusion faced by Dalits in terms of housing segregation. Apart from the successful implementation of the Kanshi Ram affordable housing scheme, the resistance of the BJP municipal councils to the provision of land for slum-dwellers was also overcome by the state government. The Chief Information Officer in the BSP government, Mr T.S. Rana, was frank in his dismissal of the protests by the municipal politicians:

If I am honest, there was little substance to these protests. I would like to emphasise, that while Municipal Authorities were unwilling to part with land, it was actually not very difficult to implement these housing schemes because of their political importance for the state government. There was very little the Municipality could do to stop these

¹¹² Interview with Manish Bhaironath, Nagla Teen, Agra, 21st March, 2013.

¹¹³ Interview with Sarvesh and Ratan Kumar, Residents, Kanshi Ram Urban Poor Housing Scheme, Kalindi Vihar, Agra, 1st April, 2013.

programmes. The Samajwadi Party government cancelled the BSP's schemes and will now start its own scheme, Basera.¹¹⁴¹¹⁵

According to Dr Raj Kumar, a Lecturer in Politics at Delhi University:

It was not difficult to overcome resistance for these programmes for the uplift of the urban poor, especially Dalits. These schemes remained a priority for the political leadership and were handled by senior and respected bureaucrats including Vijay Shankar Pandey.¹¹⁶

Sitaram Sharma, an employee of the Agra District Urban Development Authority (DUDA) and caretaker of a Kanshi Ram Housing Colony, boasts about the senior officials he hosted when the BSP was in power. The list included the Additional Cabinet Secretary, Netram, and Nassimuddin Siddiqui, a senior Cabinet Minister in the BSP government.¹¹⁷

The elite-dominated Municipal Corporation was effectively marginalised. The sole responsibility entrusted to this body was the provision of vacant land. The blueprints for the housing colonies and the processes through which they would be implemented were conceived by senior architects in the Department for Housing and Development in Lucknow.¹¹⁸ The actual implementation of the plans were handed over the District Urban Development Agency and the Agra Development Authority. These two bodies are both headed by unelected officials appointed by the state government in Lucknow. The centralised implementation of these schemes, enabled the state government to by-pass any resistance that may have been offered by political and bureaucratic elite networks in the BJP-dominated Municipal Corporation. Nonetheless, the state government took charge of strategic offices within the Municipal Corporation, namely the liaison office of the District Urban Development Agency and the office of the Chief Engineer.

Consequently, the BSP government could control the formal and top-down co-ordination of these schemes through an agency staffed by an otherwise recalcitrant bureaucracy and elected politicians closely associated with the BJP and the Hindu nationalist RSS. The BSP government ensured similar processes of command and control were put in place in Ghaziabad.¹¹⁹ However, the actual process of allotment was co-ordinated by Dalit political intermediaries with kinship and political associations

¹¹⁴ Interview with TS Rana, Uttar Pradesh Chief Information Commission, Indira Bhavan Lucknow 6th January, 2012.

¹¹⁵ The name of the Samajwadi Party (SP) affordable housing scheme has been changed to Aasra. See: <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/akhilesh-yadav-led-sp-govt-to-launch-aasra-housing-scheme-from-azam-khan-s-district/1062797/2> (Accessed: 14/09/2015).

¹¹⁶ Interview Raj Kumar, Dayal Singh College, 23rd November, 2012.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Sitaram Sharma, Kanshi Ram Housing Colony, Taj Nagari Phase I, Agra, 14th September, 2013.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Smita Aggarwal, New Delhi, 14th November, 2012.

¹¹⁹ Interview with S.K. Mishra, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, 2nd October, 2012.

with strategically placed Dalit bureaucrats. The presence of a politically conscious Dalit middle class is a vital precondition for the sustenance of political networks of reciprocity. In Agra, the Jatav elite provides protection and welfare services even as the BSP lost power at the state level. It does so through the bridging function between powerful bureaucrats, neighbourhood level social workers. As Deshpande observes, urbanisation and economic change have “introduced economic stratification within each caste” (Deshpande, 2010, 15). Nonetheless, these caste groups still find it politically useful to “fall back on their caste identities in order to put forward secular demands” (Ibid.).

The Jatav Mahapanchayat therefore serves multiple purposes. It acts as a cultural organisation¹²⁰ which reinforces the Jatav community’s Buddhist identity, while also providing charity for other Dalit communities. It also acts a commercial organisation that caters to the interests of large Jatav leather manufactures and independent artisans. Most importantly, the Jatav Mahapanchayat serves a political pressure group, which caters almost exclusively to the interests of the Jatav community in Agra and the surrounding region. The Bhimnagari Project, led by local Jatav organisations, exemplifies the philanthropic role of the Mahapanchayat.

The project has benefitted greatly under the BSP’ government’s largesse. The scheme raises funding every year for integrated development projects in Dalit colonies across the city. The pre-selected colonies are provided with Buddhist monasteries, community centres, arterial roads, sewage systems, street lights, footpaths and drinking water facilities. Funds are also provided for home improvement works. The Jatav Mahapanchayat, an organisation of the city’s affluent business community, organises the Bhimnagari project. According to the organisation’s treasurer, cited in a newspaper article:

‘When we started the Bhimnagari project in 1996, we got projects only worth Rs 1 lakh [100,000]. Thanks to [Mayawati, the BSP party president], the work done last year was worth Rs 70 [700 million] crore’ (Tiwari, 2012: 1).

The hosting of the Bhimanagari programme under the auspices of Agra’s Jatav Mahapanchayat, District Administration and the Municipal Corporation is a testament to the political ascendance of the Jatav community since the late 1970s.

At this point in time, the Jatav political machines have greatly increased in sophistication and political influence. The contrast between even 1989 and the contemporary situation is marked. The District

¹²⁰ Interview with Manoj Kumar, Block Development Officer and board member, Jatav Mahapanchayat, Nagla Teen, Agra, 19th November, 2012.

Magistrate oversaw the proceedings, whilst the Agra Development Authority donated 2.5 million rupees for slum development projects that the Jatav Community organisations undertook in honour of Ambedkar. The local administration plays an active in facilitating the ceremonies around Ambedkar's birthday on the 14th of April. This occasion now provides an opportunity for the Jatav middle class to display its power and influence in the city. As this article from the Agra edition of a major Hindi newspaper illustrates:

As Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's birthdate approaches, the administration has become suddenly proactive. The processional parade route and the Bhimnagari neighbourhood are being spruced up and readied. On Monday, the district administration and the police authorities have also toured the site in order to ensure that preparations are being completed on time...Along with the ADM (City) and SP (Agra) the organising committee of the Bhimnagari...visited the sites...the team appeared satisfied with the security arrangements, even though they were unhappy with the cleanliness of certain spots...The authorities ordered a prompt clean-up of these spots" (*Hindustan*, 9th April, 2013).

Today, the city's most senior administrators work in tandem with organisers of these rallies and the Bhimnagari programme to ensure that the Jatav claim-making and the contentious performance proceeds smoothly. The Bhimnagari programme can be seen as consolidating the Jatav claim towards the city, through material improvements in poor Dalit-majority neighbourhoods, and by providing an avenue for the Jatav political elite to display their power and influence in the city.

The city administration helps the Jatav Mahapanchayat and the patrons of the Bhimnagari Programme in their endeavours even at a time when the state government is ruled by another party that has little incentive to promote the economic and political interests of its most important electoral rivals. In 2013 even as the BSP government had been ousted from power, the Agra Development Authority still provided funds for this scheme. It sanctioned Rs 20 lakhs from its own funds.¹²¹ There were sufficiently empowered Jatav political networks at the urban level that were able to raise funds through local business and elites.

This particular Dalit patronage network is of recent vintage and is centred on Ajay Shil Gautam, a former Minister in the state government. Gautam co-ordinated the Bhimnagari programme in his neighbourhood in 2013. What is particularly irksome for established political actors is Gautam's

¹²¹ *Hindustan*, 9th April, 2013. Agra Supplement. Page 1-2.

success in establishing his own networks within the bureaucracy.¹²² This has allowed him to emerge as an important real estate developer locally.¹²³ His construction of the Buddhist temple and ability to secure funds from the Development Authority are the most overt indications of his access to state resources. Mr Gautam has also facilitated the construction of new housing developments and luxury flats on the edges of Sewla Jat, thereby consolidating his position as political patron and property developer. This is one example of the manner in which the BSP sought to use the corporate economy to shift power away from the local economy dominated by historical elites. Mr Gautam used his contacts with the state government to bring about major transformation in the political economy of the local area.

Mr Gautam provided loans and permits that enabled Jatav to set up businesses alongside the major causeway that cuts across this neighbourhood. He used his contacts with the local Development Authority to facilitate the construction of Silver Town, an elite residential complex.¹²⁴ The funds generated from this real-estate expansion then helped pay for improvements to the Jatav neighbourhoods around the neighbourhood. Mr Gautam's power base is located in the peri-urban neighbourhood of Sewla Jat. Sewla Jat was till recently, a village where the Jat community formed the dominant caste. Jat dominance is now challenged by Jatav political assertion. This assertion is new and particularly marked here because it relies to a great extent on the patronage provided by Mr Gautam. Khshrepal Singh, the Jat treasurer and Vice-president of the local tourist taxi drivers' union rues the rise of "illiterate people":

"...Now he's built himself a fine house on the main road, and the Ambedkar Park [Buddhist temple] has been built by him too, and he's in charge of the Bhimnagari Programme too this year."¹²⁵

Ajay Shil Gautam's rise in the local power hierarchy is demonstrated by the staging of the Bhimnagari programme in his neighbourhood. He also provided development funds to the Jatav neighbourhoods in his area, building houses, drains, roads, hand pumps, paved pathways, and also the Buddhist temple, which serves as a community centre and marriage hall for the community.¹²⁶ The Bhimnagari programme represents a symbolic conquest of the city by Jatavs. The Bhimnagri programme

¹²² Interview with Mr Pant, Private Residence, Agra, 11th April, 2013.

¹²³ Interview Arjun Savedia, Buddhist Temple, Sewla, Agra, 3rd December 2012.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Interview with Kshrepal Singh Jagina, Agra Tourist Taxi Drivers' Union Office, Agra 16th April, 2013.

¹²⁶ Interview Dharmender Singh Jatav, Sewla, April 9th, 2013.

patronised by Ajay Shil Gataum signified a consolidation of the Jatav political power and influence in Sewla Jat.

The symbolic claim-making is a means of expressing the shifting power relations that mark the shift from a Jat-dominated village to a peri-urban neighbourhood of Agra, where the Jatavs are politically dominant. Mr Gautam's real estate business has continued to thrive even after the state-government fell from power¹²⁷. Donating generously to the Bhimnagri programme has become a way of demonstrating power and influence within the city's senior-most bureaucrats and with senior state level politicians. It has become a status symbol to fund and oversee community development projects under the auspices of Dalit philanthropy.

The BSP has evolved from a vehicle of grass-roots Dalit political assertion into a formidable political institution. It is able to deliver significant urban development projects, jobs, government contracts, and the implementation of welfare projects for the urban poor. This can be deduced through careful observation of public expenditure by the Agra Municipal Corporation. This data is most clearly indicated in tables listed in the Appendix. The details of the public works carried out by the Agra Municipal Corporation around Ambedkar Vatikas indicates the extent to which the Jatav urban regimes have successfully embedded themselves into the city's municipal power networks. Even though the BSP is no longer the party of state government, the Jatav elite of the city is able to direct resources to Dalit neighbourhoods and community projects. The sums of money expended are considerable and there are over 35 major projects executed in one year.¹²⁸ The high density of Jatav elites, including 6 MLAs and 22 municipal councillor and a power Jatav Mahapanchayat associated with senior government officials, and business elites associated with construction and the leather industry is a testament to Dalit empowerment.

The funds sanctioned for the Bhimnagri programme in 2013 are a fraction of the funds provided by the authorities for Hindu festivals and the upkeep of local Hindu temples. For instance, the Agra district administration provided 8 crores (80 million rupees) for the annual Hindu Ram Baraat festival in September, 2014.¹²⁹ There appears to be a deliberate emulation of the strategies of Hindu nationalist politics, with a particular emphasis on symbolic politics combined with public works and philanthropy in the slums. Indeed, this places the BSP and the Jatav Mahapanchayat in direct

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ See Table 4 in the Appendix.

¹²⁹ Aditya Dev, This Year Six-Day-Long Festivals for Ram Baraat. Times of India, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/This-year-six-day-long-festivities-for-Ram-Barat/articleshow/41811275.cms>. (Available online, 14/09/15).

competition with the Hindu Nationalist BJP whose connections with the wealthiest and the senior-most bureaucrats have ensured the state-abetted creation of Hindu performances and displays of public spaces across urban North India. In response, the Dalit movement has mobilised on the basis of challenging and reconstructing spatial arrangements as a means of exercising political agency (Lyond, 2009; Jaoul, 2006; Gorrenge, 2006).

The Bhimnagari Programme attempts to do that even as the fortunes of the BSP have waned in Uttar Pradesh. Aside from 4 million rupees spent by the Municipal Corporation on public works in Dalit neighbourhoods, the Agra Municipal Corporation spent another Rs 20 lakhs (2 million) on the maintenance of multiple monasteries in 33 different areas of the city.¹³⁰ These Buddhist monasteries and shrines are dedicated to Dalit Buddhism as a political ideology. Moreover, it is common practice among working-class Jatavs to convert a room of their houses into Buddhist shrines and Ambedkar Vatikas.¹³¹ Once this recognition is obtained from the municipal authorities, it is possible to avail of state funds that fund home improvements, including painting and plastering of Pucca (permanent) dwellings. Consequently, the sums expended by the Bhimnagari Project are used to benefit the homes and neighbourhoods of working-class Dalits.

The Rs 20 lakhs expended towards the upkeep of Buddhist shrines and Ambedkar Parks in working-class homes and neighbourhoods double up as funds for home improvement and state-funded civic works for relatively deprived communities. The political and material dimensions of urban politics intersect neatly to demonstrate the extent to which the BSP and the Jatav elite have entrenched themselves into the urban governing bodies in the city. This testifies to the manner in which the Dalit political elite is embedded in some of the most political strategic and economically significant aspects of city government. These outlays are a testament to the Jatav elites' ability to offer tangible material inducements and construct a political opportunity structure, even when the state government and the city governments are dominated by rival parties.

¹³⁰ Please refer to the Appendix for a complete breakdown.

¹³¹ Interview with Surendra Pathre, Lawyer and Co-ordinator, BAMCEF trade union, Agra, 17th April, 2013.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA
AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

Table 3.1 Payment details for Additional Funds Released by the Government of India for the BSP's affordable housing schemes. The Government of India provided funds for the Scheme under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission as part of the sub-mission entitled Basic Services to the Urban Poor.

Name of City	Project Type	Total Project Cost (crores of Rupees)	Government of India Share
Mathura	Integrated rehabilitation of the urban poor staying in slums.	457.79	332.94
Agra	Integrated development for Kanshi Ram Taj Nagari Phase II	1479.22	678.28
Agra	Integrated development for Kanshi Ram Kalindi Vihar Phase I and II.	1903.77	787.66

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Finance.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA
AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

Table 3.2. Details Affordable Housing Scheme: The Kanshi Ram Urban Housing Scheme, Agra Municipal Corporation, 2008-2012.

Type	Agency Constructing the houses	Household Units Constructed	Total Number of houses allotted	Scheme
Relocation	Agra Development Authority	1360	1360	Kanshi Ram Urban Poor Housing Scheme Phase I (2008-09)
Relocation	Agra Development Authority	3640	3640	Kanshi Ram Urban Poor Housing Scheme Phase II (2009-2010)
Relocation	Agra Development Authority	608	608	Kanshi Ram Urban Poor Housing Scheme Phase III (2010-2011)
Relocation	Agra Development Authority	632	632	Kanshi Ram Urban Poor Housing Scheme Phase III (2010-2011)
6240				
Insitu	DUDA	1277	1277	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)
Insitu	DUDA	623	623	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)
Insitu	DUDA	520	520	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)
Insitu	DUDA	2335	1212	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)
Insitu	DUDA	2708	1358	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)
Insitu	DUDA	10553	8080	Sarvajan Hitaya Gharib Awas Malikana Haq Yojana (2009)

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA
AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

Table 3.3 Public Investment Implemented by the Agra Municipal Corporation under the Bhimnagari Scheme, 2013.

Project No.	Project Type.	Amount Allocated (Indian Rupees)	Planning Permission Approval Date	Project Implementation Date	Amount Expended (USD)	Contractor (Caste)
1	Road Surfacing and Layering from House number 107 to 50 B. Shahganj Ward	642,700	09-04-13	20-04-13	565,576	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
2	Road Surfacing and Layering from <i>Tirahi Khatri</i> Bar to the Saket Intersection	837,400	09-04-13	20-04-13	736,912	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
	Total (Rs.)	1480100 (22,320 USD)			1302488 (19641 USD)	

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.

Table 3.4. Public Investment Implemented by the Agra Municipal Corporation under the Bhimnagari Scheme, 2013.

Project No.	Project Type.	Amount Allocated (Indian Rupees)	Planning Permission Approval Date	Project Completion Date	Amount Expended	Contractor (Caste)
1	Shahganj Ward. Paving and Covering of Roads and Drains.	905,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	845,494	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
2	Shahganj Ward. Paving and Covering of Roads and Drains.	596,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	576,969	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
4	Shahganj Ward Construction of a Link Road and Interlocking Paving Stones.	972,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	812,978	Shiv Kumar (Jatav)
5	Shahganj Ward Roads and Drains covered on the lane.	692,200	19-03-13	30-03-13	683,547	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
6	Shahganj Ward Link Road and Drains connecting	403,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	344,220	Arora Construction (Panjabi Khatri)
	Total	4,532,200 (68,345 USD)			4,068,362 (61,351 USD)	

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.

3.10. Conclusion

The settlement of Dalit neighbourhoods in Agra is a testament to the centrality of the neighbourhood in forming the basis for collective political action. As Holston observes, the process of demanding legal recognition for unauthorised neighbourhoods becomes “both the context and substance of a new urban citizenship” (Holston, 2008, 4). Nothing illustrates the transformation of Jatavs from a subjugated to a sub-elite community better than the ability of Jatav elites to provide patronage to social groups historically of a higher caste and more affluent than themselves. Moreover, Jatav philanthropy firmly shores up the community’s status as citizens with social standing and political influence.¹³²

The BSP state government has been central to the emergence of Jatav economic elite in the 1990s. It was primarily due to the BSP’s influence that that Jatavs secured the correct implementation of reservation quotas in state employment (Guha, 2011; Jaffrelot, 2012). What is more, the party’s five-year rule as a government with a full majority was central in placing Jatav economic elites and political entrepreneurs at the heart of urban government in Agra. Their appointment to senior positions of power enabled Dalit officials and Jatav entrepreneurs to institute power networks and reciprocal relationships with business, especially in leather manufacturing, tourism and real estate.¹³³

These networks prevailed even after the BSP lost state-wide office, as the party retained its position as the single largest party in western Uttar Pradesh, with seven legislators from Agra. Significantly, the Jatav political elite continues to exercise influence through informal connections with well-placed officials in strategic positions in the Agra Development Authority, the Municipal Corporation and the Yamuna Expressway Development Authority.¹³⁴ The ability of these officials and elites to influence urban government and to transfer economic resources to Dalit neighbourhoods is much reduced. Nonetheless, strategically placed senior bureaucrats have retained their networks and contacts with Agra’s business elite. This has enabled them to retain their ability to provide patronage and access to basic welfare services to the city’s working-class Dalit majority. The BSP government’s provision of affordable housing and the security of tenure provided to low-income neighbourhoods in the city have remained irreversible. This is in sharp contrast to rural areas, where cultivatable land allotted to *Dalit-Bahujans* was snatched back by dominant landed communities, once the Samajwadi Party returned

¹³² Interview with Dushyant Maurya, Agra, 29th March, 2013.

¹³³ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Agra, 16th April, 2013.

¹³⁴ Interview with Suresh Kumar Jatav, Agra Municipal Corporation, 20th August, 2013.

to power in 2012.¹³⁵ The expropriation of redistributed arable land is a recurring pattern in rural Uttar Pradesh (Singh, 1992; Guha, 2011). However, the welfare gains to the urban poor in terms of housing security under the BSP have been of lasting benefit, despite systemic official neglect under the new dispensation.¹³⁶

Leela Fernandez (2007) draws on Lefebvre's concept of the "rights to the city" as an important facet of substantiating the rights entailed by democratic citizenship. Fernandez conceptualises the rights to the city as constituting both a "right to habitation" and the "right to participation", defining it as the "right of all urban dwellers to collectively enjoy the benefits, cultural plurality, social diversity, economic advantages and opportunities of urban life, as well as to actively participate in urban management" (Fernandez, 2007, 217). Zerah et al. (2011) argue that the concept of the right to the city is best situated through a discussion of urban citizenship, where they define citizenship as a "boundary between citizens and others i.e. those who are inside, and those who are outside the concerned community" (Zerah et al., 2011, 4). In this manner, the rights prescribed by constitutional citizenship can no longer be denied to the Dalits of Agra.

¹³⁵ Piyush Srivastava. 2013. "SP goons will be taught a lesson Mayawati's bone-chilling warning after Ambedkar hoardings are removed in UP. *Mailonline India*. April 13. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2309004/Angry-Mayawatis-bone-chilling-warning-SP-goondas-Akhileshs-party-removes-Ambedkar-hoardings.html#ixzz3yXSuzGz2>

¹³⁶ Interview with Gaurav Jatav and Ratan Lal Balmiki, Kanshi Ram Affordable Housing Scheme, Kalindi Vihar, Agra, March 26th.

4. The BSP, Gurjar political entrepreneurs and the construction of “Intermediate Regimes” in the National Capital Region

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the manner in which the BSP state government incorporated Gurjar power networks in order to construct multi-ethnic electoral coalitions and pro-business regimes in Ghaziabad. Gurjar political entrepreneurs acted as crucial conduits on behalf of business and the local state, negotiating land acquisition deals and the implementing of the BSP’s urban development agenda in the National Capital Region. The BSP state government viewed the cultivators and political entrepreneurs from the Gurjar community as valuable allies given their influence as landowners and political patrons. The BSP artfully crafted an urban regime which brought together bureaucratic elites, corporate groups, intermediate classes and urban working classes into an electoral coalition based around material interests and economic growth.

The support of Gurjar political patrons was important in reducing the disruption to urban development and the economic interests of the BSP’s corporate partners. Major projects included the JayPrakash Associates, the Yamuna Expressway, the Wave City Centre, a Formula One stadium, the Ansal Group’s golf courses and luxury hotels, and a plethora of real-estate ventures constructing apartment complexes for urban middle classes seeking affordable housing proximate to New Delhi.¹³⁷ There were even plans for an international airport in the Gurjar-dominated Jewar constituency. Yet, despite the acquisition of land, the Congress-led Government of India refused to provide central government clearance for the BSP government’s project.¹³⁸

Conflicts over land acquisition and resistance from landowners form the single largest hurdle to industrial development in India. These conflicts have a long history in Ghaziabad, where dominant cultivators are politically mobilised and have had significant influence over the local state since Indian independence (Brass, 2011). The process of co-option by the BSP state government implied the extensive accommodation of Gurjar patrons as strategic allies who were placed in charge of implementing urban development schemes, Public Private Partnerships and were expected to use their social networks and traditional kinship ties in order to insulate the BSP’s costly infrastructure and real-estate projects from disruption and destabilising conflicts over land acquisition. They augmented the state’s limited capacity to deliver real-estate and infrastructure projects on time.

¹³⁷ Interview with Vikrant Tongad,

¹³⁸ Ashish Sharma and Tarun Shukla. “Awaiting an airport excitedly”. *Livemint*. 5th June, 2007.

4.2. The Political Economy of Caste Ghaziabad in the National Capital Region

Ghaziabad and the neighbouring district of Gautam Buddha Nagar are amongst the most prosperous in all of Uttar Pradesh. In Ghaziabad, 83% of all houses are electrified, while the figure for Gautam Buddha Nagar is 81% (Census of India, 2011, 115). A full 58% of Ghaziabad and 65% of census houses in Gautam Buddha Nagar are classified as “good” with regard to their condition of repair. Of the remaining, 38% of census houses in Ghaziabad and 33% in Gautam Buddha are classified as “livable” (Census of India, 2011, 109). Moreover, in Uttar Pradesh the cities of Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar have the highest rate of households which use liquified petroleum gas (LPG) rather than cow-dung cakes as cooking fuel. In Ghaziabad sub-division, 77% of households use LPG for cooking fuel, the highest rate for the entire state of Uttar Pradesh (Census of India, 2011, 118). The equivalent figure for Gautam Buddha Nagar is 73% (Ibid.). These are significant markers of prosperity. Much of this prosperity is recent and the city has experienced rapid population growth and urban expansion. The urban district’s population expanded by 40% between 2001 and 2011, twice the average for Uttar Pradesh state (Ghaziabad District Census Handbook, 2011, 15).

Ghaziabad’s Scheduled Caste Population forms one-sixth (16.5%) of the city’s total population (Ghaziabad District Census Handbook, 2011, 12). This is below the state average for Uttar Pradesh (20.5%). The literacy rate amongst the city’s scheduled caste population is above average for the state. Given the relatively lower percentage of Dalits in the population, the BSP’s recent electoral success in the city has relied on the party’s ability to forge a multi-caste electoral coalition. None of the BSP’s elected state-level representatives in the city are Dalit, although there are a number of Dalits elected to the city’s Municipal Corporation. Even so, more than half (12) of the city’s 22 municipal councillors are non-Dalits, with only ten Dalits representing the BSP in the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.

Ghaziabad’s urban development owes much to its proximity to the major urban centres of New Delhi, NOIDA, and Meerut. The city emerged as a manufacturing centre in the 1990s, even though the city has a history of state-directed industrialisation going back to the 1950s and the 1960s. Ghaziabad achieved municipal status in 1994, and the politics of the Municipal Corporation has remained dominated by Vaishya, Panjabi, Rajput, Tyagi and Brahmin professionals ever since.

The city also bears the hallmarks of *kisan* (yeomanry or middle-peasant) politics since the post-independence period. The city’s politics is marked by competition and collaboration between mercantile elites from the Vaishya, Jain and Panjabi trading communities, their Brahmin and Kayasth professional associates and upwardly mobile Jaat, Tyagi, Gurjar and Yadav entrepreneurs with their

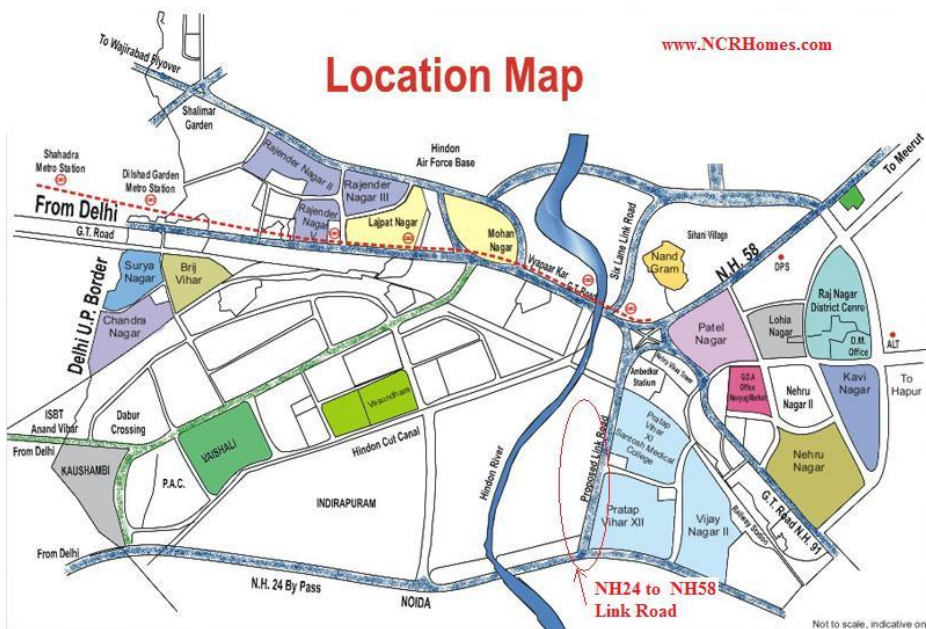
origins in the city's agrarian hinterland. The cultivating communities play an influential role as intermediate elites with commercial interests in transport, brick kilns, and in the real-estate and construction industry.

Alongside the afore-mentioned, the city's Muslim community has secured significant social mobility through entry into the urban economy as small manufacturers, skilled craftsmen, horticulturalists, and leather merchants. The communities are spatially segregated. The primary city of Ghaziabad, especially the upper-caste, elite-dominated Raj Nagar neighbourhood remains a bastion of the BJP. Upper-caste Tyagis, landowners who claim a semi-Brahmin status (akin to Bhumihars in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) are a prominent business community, whose relatively recent entry into this Vaishya-ruled city is evinced by the election of Rajendra Tyagi, a factory-owner, as the municipal councillor from Raj Nagar. Nonetheless, the city's municipal politics remains controlled by the Vaishya community. Damayanti Goel, the city's former mayor, enjoys close connections with the city's business community, and earned a reputation for administrative competence through extensive investments in roads, street lights, parks and the regularisation of small businesses¹³⁹.

The city's assembly segments are represented overwhelmingly by the BSP. The affluent city centre, the location of the Ghaziabad assembly constituency is represented by Suresh Bansal, a property tycoon, with major stakes in the city's real-estate industry. The Muslim community has come to dominate Loni and Murad Nagar on the edge of the city. The legislators from both constituencies are Muslims from the BSP. Ghaziabad's urban agglomeration is a patchwork of townships segregated by public highways and gated communities constructed by the city's development authority. The affluent community of Indirapuram is separated from the working-class settlement of Vijay Nagar by National Highway-24. Similarly, Khora village, is separated from the rest of the urban area by Ram Manohar Lohia Marg. Khora, a migrant township, houses mainly Dalits and Muslims.¹⁴⁰ The BJP dominates Raj Nagar (top-right corner of map 4.1.) and in middle-class neighbourhoods. The BSP has a major presence in the city, and Suresh Bansal, a property developer associated with Indirapuram (see map 4.1.) represents the BSP as the city's legislator. The BSP facilitated the construction of low-income neighbourhoods along the Hindon river (centre of map 4.1). Migrant settlements were also constructed on barren land separated from the affluent neighbourhoods of Vasundhara and Indirapuram by major arterial roads. Ghaziabad is included on the network for the Delhi metro, and this has integrated the city with the national capital.

¹³⁹ Interview with Akash Vashisht, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, 21st September 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with SP Singh, Adarsh Nagar, Ghaziabad, 25th September 2013.



Map 4.1. Ghaziabad City Centre is a patchwork of gated communities and working-class settlements.

The majority of the new migrants to the city are Dalits, Muslims and Other Backward Castes. These communities settled in low-income neighbourhoods like Rahul Vihar, Pappu Vihar, and Vijay Nagar¹⁴¹. These neighbourhoods are centrally located along the Grand Trunk Road, and the Hindon River which cuts across Ghaziabad. Nonetheless, the Trunk Road and the river separate these migrant neighbourhoods from the middle-class and affluent residential complexes in Ghaziabad, namely, Dilshad Gardens, Vasundhara and Sahibabad, which is proximate to the less affluent Khoda village. The upper-caste status of Suresh Bansal, Amarpal Sharma, Mukul Upadhaya, and Mohit Tyagi have made the Dalit party acceptable to the city's upper-caste residents. Moreover, their association with the BSP attracts the support of the city's Dalit-Bahujan working class, whose numerical preponderance provides electoral heft.¹⁴²

Ghaziabad is an urban centre which has experienced rapid economic growth, as it provides a site of affordable housing for the Indian middle class. The city's industrialisation is the consequence of its

¹⁴¹ Interview with Satish Mishra and Devendra Sharma, Ghaziabad, 15th September, 2013.

¹⁴² Interview with Ashoka Nirwan, Ghaziabad, 4th January, 2013.

proximity to New Delhi, India's booming capital. Ghaziabad is connected to the Delhi Metro and receives investment and capital inflows unavailable to other cities in Uttar Pradesh. The BSP government sought to capitalise on the city's strategic location and proximity to the affluent commercial and industrial hubs of New Delhi and NOIDA. It sought to use the commercial value of property and the need for urban space to develop and expand the National Capital Region (NCR) into the peri-urban districts of Greater NOIDA.

The BSP relied on strategic alliances with non-Dalit elites to ensure the timely implementation of its infrastructure projects and to ensure private commercial actors were able to make returns on their investments with limited risks. The entry of district elites and rural communities into the city has also shaped political alliances and commercial partnerships between the traditional upper-caste elites, and dominant castes from the region's rural hinterland.

The BSP's encouragement of the corporate economy assured the entry of wealthy upper-caste businessmen into the party. These political actors from Vaishya, Tyagi, Rajput, Panjabi Khatri and Brahmin families also relied on the informal political institutions of the BSP's Gurjar patrons to deliver real-estate projects in a manner that balanced the interests and preferences of both the upper-caste middle classes and working-class Dalits. Gurjar political entrepreneurs closely involved in real estate and land-ownership provide the crucial link needed for this. Gurjar political entrepreneurs ensured a BSP victory for Gurjar candidates in the adjacent districts of Greater NOIDA, and Jewar. Moreover, Madan Gurjar, a prominent real-estate entrepreneur implemented the construction of both middle-class and low-income housing in the city. Amarpal Sharma, the BSP MLA from Sahibabad, is a close associate of Madan Gurjar, whose caste networks span the entire National Capital Region.

While elite actors like Suresh Bansal facilitated corporate investment into the city and the region, intermediate political entrepreneurs from the Gurjar community ensured the real-estate projects were constructed, as they possessed the connections with local government, material suppliers and labour contractors. It would appear that in the confrontation between rural and urban interests in Ghaziabad, urban interests clearly won out over rural interests. This is reflected in the nature of Ghaziabad's urban expansion, as the city's borders have expanded well beyond the elite confines of a small district town and transformed the region into a major urban centre, with concentrated economic activity.

During its tenure, the BSP used the state government in a manner that encouraged the arrival of corporate capital into the city. The arrival of corporate groups benefitted the Gurjar community in the city, as the community lacked the influence to enter into urban politics in a municipal arena controlled

by upper-caste elites associated with the BJP. However, corporate capital provided the Gurjar community with access, especially as they were able to exploit their links with the Dalit-led state government in order to gain control over the political processes associated with construction and real estate in the city. The mediating role played by Gurjar patrons was absolutely central to the construction of the BSP's electoral alliance in the city. The Gurjar patrons possess the information and capacity to implement real-estate deals, and construct both middle-class and low-income housing, while the upper-caste elites played the role of financiers and lobbyists working to ensure the inflow of corporate capital and investment from metropolitan urban centres in India and abroad.¹⁴³¹⁴⁴

In Ghaziabad, the BSP was reliant on Dalits within the bureaucracy to license and co-ordinate major urban development and affordable projects, but relied on Gurjars, Vaishya, Panjabi, Tyagi and Muslim contractors and entrepreneurs to implement the projects. In both cities, the BSP emerged successful as the BSP's non-Dalit patrons were able to attract the votes and support of poorer kinsfolk, who also benefitted from employment and patronage. Poorer Dalits were also incorporated into these patronage networks, and were mainly compensated through affordable housing and transfers of civic amenities to Dalit neighbourhoods. Poorer Dalits also benefitted considerably from the elevation of Dalit civil servants and political elites into positions of influence over the local bureaucracy. This provided the community with access to the state through kinship ties with relatives, neighbours and associates within the bureaucracy. Despite their wealth and status, Dalit officials and bureaucrats continue to experience caste-based segregation and live adjacent to poorer kinsfolk. In Ghaziabad, low-income Dalit neighbourhoods were constructed adjacent to upper-caste, and middle-class localities in a manner, even if the neighbourhoods were separated by physical barriers, including major causeways and the Hindon River.¹⁴⁵

4.3. The historic patterns of land ownership in W. UP: *Bhaichara* not feudal social relations

In Uttar Pradesh, once members of historically excluded groups have gained access to the state, they have sought to deploy the social instrumentality of the state to transfer valuable resources towards favoured communities. What Karl Polanyi describes as the "liquidation of feudalism" (Polanyi, 1944, 180) was less of a historical fact and far less pertinent to the agrarian regions around the British garrison town of Meerut. Ghaziabad was only later carved out of Meerut district. In the colonial era, the rural areas and the small *qasba* [market town] of Ghaziabad was under the Meerut

¹⁴³ Interview with KK Singh Ghaziabad, 20th September, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Vikrant Tongad and Kuldip Nagar, 25th April, 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, 18th September, 2013.

Division.¹⁴⁶ In the post-Independence era, the political economy of the region has been marked by the land ownership patterns that emerged following the empowerment of rural cultivators from Jat, Tyagi and Gurjar castes. The politics of the middle-peasantry was given momentum by Charan Singh (Jaffrelot, 2003, 281).¹⁴⁷

Professor Jagpal Singh provides an account that is completely at odds with feudalism with regard to social relations enjoyed with the front-line agents of the colonial state. As Singh observes, this system is defined by the absence of *intermediaries* between the front-line agents of the state and the yeomanry. Instead, these self-governing communities, who managed and cultivated land according to the *Bhaichara* system, paid their rent to the state, through their representative known as the *muqqadam* or *lambardar* who is at best “first among equals”. This office held no more authority than that of an official spokesman for the community or clan. According to Jagpal Singh, the political economy of land-ownership amongst Jats and Gurjars is path dependent on their tribal origins (Singh, 1992, 12).

The intermediary role of Gurjars and the state prevails to this day. The BSP state government sought to co-opt this inherited institution on behalf of its own political agenda. BSP accommodated Gurjar intermediate elites and created an intermediate urban regime that combined commercial elites, intermediate classes, and the petty bourgeois cadre who are the leaders and sub-leaders of the party’s core constituency. Barbara Harriss-White draws inspiration from Michael Kalecki (1972) to argue that intermediate classes are composited of intermediate traders with links to agrarian entrepreneurs, who form a district elite in urban political economies embedded in the wider provincial agrarian economy. Intermediate elites yield considerable political influence, and are able to deploy informal networks and relationships with the agents of state in order to retain economic niches (Harriss-White, 2003, 42-50).

The manner in which the BSP established the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) and deployed competent and well-respected bureaucrats, Dalit and non-Dalit, into the governing regimes of Greater NOIDA reflects historic parallels with the Nehruvian model of top-down, technocratic government. These arrangements between senior bureaucrats, a few politically well-placed corporations and local intermediate regimes, comprised mainly of Gurjar business elites

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Aakash Vashisht, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad. 15th September, 2013.

¹⁴⁷ Charan Singh’s political legacy remains an important one in Western Uttar Pradesh. The political party he founded, the Rashtriya Loka Dal, now headed by his son Ajit Singh remains a major political formation in Western Uttar Pradesh.

and political leaders sidestepped the BSP's legislators and political factions. Instead political power was concentrated in the hands of the central leadership associated with the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in Lucknow.

Land acquisition for the major development projects did not always proceed smoothly. Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar (2014) explain that the agitation by farmers, centred on the industrial development in the village of Bhatta Parsaul in Greater NOIDA, related to land acquired during the tenure of the previous, Samajwadi Party government. Nonetheless, the BSP state government had to respond to the fallout in 2011, which it did through a strategy of accommodation. As Pai and Kumar explain:

In May 2011, large-scale violence related to land acquisition took place in the twin villages of Bhatta-Parsaul in Gautam Buddha Nagar district. Its instigation has been attributed by a local political leader, Mr. Manveer Singh Tevatiya. His motivation, it has been alleged, was to consolidate political support during an election campaign. Four lives were ultimately lost in gunfire exchanges, including two policemen. Many others, including the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police, were injured. Opposition parties – both the Congress and the BJP – blamed the ruling BSP government for the violence... The BSP-led government denied the accusations levelled by its political opponents, but recognised the political trouble it faced. It responded with a decision to increase the compensation rates for the acquired land by 12.5%. This was the third increase in four years.

The BSP state government worked hard to accommodate intermediate classes in the Western Uttar Pradesh region, in order to prevent serious disruption to its urban and industrial development projects in the region. Additionally, the BSP reconceived the role of the state in the political economy of urban development. The state was recast as a mere “facilitator of transactions between private parties”, a policy decision which made land acquisition more profitable for the farmer.

Henceforth, the state government would — only be involved in notifying and earmarking the boundary of the land.... The price of the land and other modalities would be decided by the buyers and the sellers through direct negotiations... The amount of developed land to be returned to farmers would be increased from 10%...to 16%. An annuity would also be payable, for 33 years, to owners whose land was acquired. The rate would be Rs. 23,000 per acre. This was Rs. 3,000 per acre more than was announced in the 2010 policy. [In the affected constituency] the BSP easily defeated the Congress candidate. The SP,

which has traditionally considered this region its stronghold, came third in this constituency (Pai and Kumar, 2014, 23-24)

Paul Brass describes conflict over land acquisition in Ghaziabad as a "confrontation between rural and urban economic interests" (Brass, 2011; Brass, 1965). The BSP state government sought to promote urban interests even as it sought to accommodate and placate rural interests. The conflicts over land acquisition did not have adverse political consequences for the BSP. This may reflect the increasing importance of urban development as the major locus of political aspiration in India, even amongst the cultivating communities which once mobilised against land acquisition and industrialisation. The sociology of the BSP's Gurjar patrons reflect the centrality of urban occupations as the central source of wealth and influence amongst the community, as the relative value of urban real estate has sharply appreciated. District elites have leveraged their rural affluence and status to enter into urban political networks. Access to these networks provide economic leverage, through their ability to influence the local state and participate in urban economic activity.

The BSP accommodated the Gurjar intermediate classes into its pro-business governing arrangements in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region. The Dalit-led party of government relied on Gurjar patrons to ensure that the material proceeds of growth would directly reach the socially disadvantaged Dalit working classes. Nonetheless, the BSP had to rely upon some urban elite groups to survive politically, as well as financially. It chose to target the Gurjars to be their allies, because catering to the social and economic interests of this community was possible without betraying the Dalits.

4.4. The BSP's New Economic Policy and the Gurjar political entrepreneurs

The process of urban development includes a diverse assemblage of actors in its fold. Economic resources are important for political agency, despite the fact that there is not always a perfect correlation between the two. The strength of numbers is also critically important in a democracy. The nexuses between builders and political leaders are important ones, because the former group provides capital while the latter group provides security, and the ability to capture land, and hold land vacant until the point the builder is ready to develop the land for his own private profit. Political parties require business people to provide independent resources for politicians, and they are then chosen as candidates by state elites as they can support their own election campaigns while also providing a steady flow of resources upwards to the political leadership. By providing Gurjars with strategic commercial and political positions, the BSP was able to accommodate a broad-based coalition of builders and farmers into its urbanisation agenda.

The local Gurjar community then implemented the pro-business policies in conjunction with the state government in a manner that greatly pleased external investors and property developers. The Jatav community continued to control the strategic offices of engineers, planners, administrators and surveyors in the offices of the Development Authority, District Magistrate, and Revenue bodies in the region. This enabled them to co-ordinate projects on behalf of the BSP state government in Lucknow. They ensured that Gurjar businessmen and politicians were provided with the extremely lucrative tenders and construction contracts in the National Capital Region. They were the trusted lieutenants of the BSP state government in Lucknow, managing rent-seeking arrangements that financed election campaigns and judiciously transferring a share of economic resources to Dalit neighbourhoods.¹⁴⁸

In return for this preferential treatment by the BSP state government, the Gurjar entrepreneurs were expected to hire Jatavs as sub-contractors and skilled workmen. Moreover, Gurjar property developers were also expected to ensure the construction of low-income housing projects for Jatav migrants in the region.¹⁴⁹ In turn Gurjar patrons worked with wealthier Vaishya and Panjabi political entrepreneurs with links to business houses in New Delhi and even overseas. At the same time, Gurjar entrepreneurs provided patronage to poor Muslim and Brahmins within the BSP.¹⁵⁰ These governing arrangements continue even as the BSP government lost the state assembly elections because of direct and personalised links between Gurjar entrepreneurs, political leaders and Dalit bureaucrats in local levels of government authority. However, both Gurjar and Jatav networks have been disrupted and superseded by Yadav government officials and political entrepreneurs deputed by the state government in Lucknow. Nonetheless, the SP lacks a strong local political constituency to effectively displace the Gurjar-Dalit networks established by the BSP.

Intermediate classes have favourable connections with bureaucrats in these networks and these are used to create composite governing regimes between political and economic elites within different jurisdictions. The Chief Minister, Mayawati, enabled ministers and incorporated district elites from the Gurjar community to avail of contracts and tenders and rent-see on the condition that Dalits were provided a significant proportion of the rents generated from pro-business policies. For instance, legislation enshrined the right for Dalits to avail of at least 49% of tenders and quotas. In practice, this created a class of Jatav sub-contractors who benefited from their association with much wealthier

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 16th October, 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Raghav Priyadarshi, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 15th December 2014.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Akash Vashisht, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, 28th September, 2013.

Gurjar political and commercial entrepreneurs, who in turn were associated with and accommodated by senior leaders and government officials affiliated with the BSP. These groups were affiliated with urban development initiatives implemented by the NOIDA, GNIDA and YEIDA authorities. This included the construction of the expressway covering six districts in Uttar Pradesh, ancillary public infrastructure projects, and commercial real-estate projects. The BSP's political effectiveness depended on the political cooperation of local elites, in particular those from the Gurjar community.

Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar (2014) illustrated the manner in which the intermediate classes were accommodated into the BSP's top-down governing arrangements through direct negotiations between senior government officials, local landowners and their political representatives. Their paper cites the Deputy CEO of the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) to indicate the extent to which the BSP government sought to accommodate the material interests of the local landowners.

According to GNIDA's Deputy CEO, 'The farmers have been getting assurance on paper about the land since the deed was signed, but it is only during the current BSP regime [post-2007] that the distribution of land actually has been taken seriously. In the last two years [2007-2009] we have distributed nearly 8,000 developed plots and the backlog would be completed in another year or two' (Pai and Kumar, 2014, 14).

Pai and Kumar also argue that agitations around land acquisition are primarily mechanisms through which landowners collectively bargain for higher rates of compensation of farmland acquired for urban industrial development. As they observe,

Most of the farmers that we interviewed from that area stated that they were not against the land acquisition per se; they were agitating for increased compensation rates... According to the GNIDA Deputy CEO, the government had to spend Rs. 300 crores to buy peace and abort this agitation. Thus, the Mayawati government remained sensitive to the demands of the farmers and avoided confrontation with them in this region (Pai and Kumar, 2014, 15).

4.5. Ghaziabad: Urbanisation, Economic Change and Electoral Politics

Dushyant Nagar, a local Congress political leader from the Gurjar community, argues that losing agricultural land compels farmers to enter the uncertain world of the urban informal economy where risks are high and economic insecurity rife:

You can earn a lot of money in the city, but then there are also huge risks involved, and if things go wrong then there is a lot of hardship in the modern economy. A farmer whose land is acquired will buy a bus that costs 10 lakhs, and have to spend money on a driver, a conductor and a cleaner, and then have to make his money back in a very competitive industry. I would argue that is important that the farmer's land be valued as commercial land *before* its acquisition and not *afterwards*, so that there is fairer compensation for the farmer. However, the BSP government cares more for big corporate conglomerates rather than the poor farmer, this is because Mayawati can make money of these big conglomerates without angering Mayawati vote bank who have never been major landowners in the first place.¹⁵¹

However, Vikram Tongad, who is an environmental activist and an associate of Nagar's, provides a more nuanced opinion than the strident anti-corporate rhetoric of the intellectual and the politician. According to him:

Farmers will always complain. That is our democratic right. However, we want new opportunities in the city and we hope to benefit from urban development. The BSP focused many resources and promoted urbanisation more than any other government. The SP may talk about much higher compensation for farmers and landowners than the BSP offered but in reality there is only pro-Yadav favouritism, no development and only crime. Under Maya, the Development Authority worked extremely efficiently and with full authority. My grandfather is an old Gurjar Farmer, and he will never stop farming his own land even though he is in his eighties. Yet, he does not oppose economic development and urbanisation, because it helps his grandchildren take advantage of the economic boom emanating from Delhi. We favour development too, even if I am concerned about environmental sustainability, deforestation and groundwater tables.¹⁵²

It is also fair to say that the ability of the BSP government to institutionalise compensation, by creating payment mechanisms through public bodies, invoked considerable support from its accommodated political patrons, not least from the Gurjar community. This was absolutely essential to win the trust of the affected landowners in the six districts, many whom are Gurjar, through which the Expressway

¹⁵¹ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Head Office, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad. 18th September, 2013.

¹⁵² Interview with Vikrant Tongad, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad. 17th August, 2013.

would run. Sudha Pai and Avinash Kumar come straight to the point with regard to the political dynamics of these policy negotiations:

When Mayawati became chief minister in 2007, she took administrative action to exempt such land from registration fees. According to the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority Deputy CEO, —the government had to spend Rs. 300 crores to buy peace and abort this agitation. Thus, the Mayawati government remained sensitive to the demands of the farmers and avoided confrontation with them in this region.

Through its pro-business and urban development projects, BSP could ensure that Jatavs were able to enter and progress in industries in both cities. These strategic partnerships ensured the economic advancement of Dalits and the political advancement of the allied communities. Gurjar patrons were also able to provide the BSP with votes from skilled workmen, business associates and other employees working for them. Consequently, with a BSP government in power, it made sense for affluent Gurjars to form alliances with the otherwise much less affluent Jatav community in order to leverage their contacts with senior Jatav and pro-BSP bureaucrats the Ghaziabad, NOIDA and Greater NOIDA development authorities, which together hold some of the most valuable real estate in India. Gurjars are amongst the largest landowners in the region. Political conflicts around land acquisition forms a singularly immense hurdle to urban development and industrialisation in India. Large private corporations balk at investing in the country given the level of political instability and commercial uncertainty created by political conflicts around land acquisition. According to Krishna Hun, a Gurjar politician and landowner from Meerut:

The BSP lost in Uttar Pradesh because there was a backlash against Jatav assertion. There was a sense that the Jatavs were becoming the new dominant caste, and that caused concern because it felt as if there was exploitation caused by this. However, in Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA, the BSP was able to establish itself over the past five years. They received massive corporate donations and were able to attract investment. So despite the sense of Jatav exploitation, they won. They won because of their pro-urbanisation policies which won the Gurjar community over.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Interview with Krishna Hun, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad. 17th August, 2013.

Surendra Singh Bhatti, also from the Gurjar community, agreed. He explained that the BSP reinforced the best practices that improved the ease of doing business in state not usually known for administrative efficiency.¹⁵⁴ According to Mr Bhatti:

We look to Gujarat as a role model because it possible to get clearances and permits through a 'single window system'. In Uttar Pradesh, to get any form of business set up, you need to go to several authorities all at once. You have to get clearances from all the departments involved in the process separately. This is why industry has no shown interest in investing and manufacturing units have moved to Gujarat and Haryana over the past decade. The BSP government reversed that decline because they used the NOIDA, Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA Development Authority in a manner that made it very easy for business to invest. Corporate houses also made payments straight into the party funds in return for these very pro-business policies. This benefitted the Gurjar community because we are enabled to set up businesses as suppliers, builder's merchants and labour contractors.¹⁵⁵

Jitendra Nagar, a brick supplier, agrees. He argued that good government required dictatorship that only charismatic politicians like Narendra Modi and Mayawati were in a position to establish:

There is no control over the administrative machinery under the SP because the officials do not know who is in charge. There is no respect for seniority anymore nor for administrative procedure. The only thing that matters with the Samajwadi Party are the direct, personalised connections with officials (*Sifarish*). Without this absolutely nothing gets done, and at the same time it is very difficult to get clearances and permits for business. If we go to the Road Transport Office to transport our goods we are happy to pay a bribe as long as work gets done. This is what happened under the BSP. Nowadays, we are not sure if our business will proceed even after paying a bribe. If we bribe the Officer, this does not mean that the Neta (politician) in the next district will leave us alone because he is from a different SP faction. Under Mayawati, all power was centralised and officials had to follow her orders. All the different government departments were coordinated and centralised so work proceeded very quickly.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Surendra Singh Bhatti, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad. 17th August, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Jitendra Nagar, Nagar Construction Supplies, Dadri, Ghaziabad. 17th December, 2012.

Vikrant Tongad, the environmental activist, observes:

Under the BSP regime, state officials would respond to us. Since the BSP gave all power to the officials in Development Authority, so we expected little from the local MLA. The MLA had to come to our official functions, listen to our concerns, show his face during our *Kuan Pooja* [A Gurjar sacrament to bless clean water sources], while the Development Authority got on with the task of urban development.¹⁵⁷

As a Bengali professional who owns property in Greater NOIDA observed:

In the region where I bought property, the farmers have also greatly benefited. They are buying Audis and Sports Utility Vehicles.¹⁵⁸

The role of the BSP as dynamic political party is an interesting one, the party had to reach accommodation with urban upper-caste voters from Brahmin and Vaishya, and Muslim communities. At one level, this inverted coalition of the extremes is unsurprising, despite the immense ideological and social dissonance between Dalits and the upper castes. However, these communities share a common antipathy towards landed, rural communities, many of them OBCs, who have deployed inherited assets and social networks to displace traditional urban elites. As the Kayasth editor of a major Hindi daily observed:

The people of central Ghaziabad voted for Suresh Bansal. Mr Bansal did a lot of philanthropic activity in the working-class colonies of Ghaziabad, so he was able to garner votes there. This is where the majority voters are. However, it is also true that the people of Ghaziabad voted for the economic development promoted by the BSP.¹⁵⁹

He then emphasised another point:

The Bania community is unhappy with the Tyagi community. They feel that they are unable to match the muscle power of the recent Tyagi migrants to Ghaziabad. Consequently, they would rather vote for a wealthy Bania on the BSP ticket than a Tyagi.¹⁶⁰

However, what is more remarkable is the manner in which the BSP has been able to win over Gurjars, who are wealthy and politically powerful, but also a social group known for their violent

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Vikrant Tongad, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad, 13th August, 2013.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with A. Ganguly, London, 14th July.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Ashok Nirwan, Ghaziabad Editor, *Deshbandhu*, 15th December, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Ashok Nirwan, Ghaziabad Editor, *Deshbandhu*, 15 December, 2013.

confrontations with Dalits. This reflects a certain maturation of the polity, when caste differences are set aside as citizens vote according to social and material interests.

The BSP was able to win over sections of the Gurjar community, even though hostility between Jatavs and Gurjars remains to this day. The multi-ethnic transformation of the BSP in the National Capital Region was only possible because the revenues provided by economic growth enabled the BSP to offer positions of authority and strategic responsibility to communities whose economic and political interests coincided with the Jatavs. For this to happen, the BSP had to offer different bundles of goods to different groups of voters. The BSP was compelled to allocate patronage benefits to the Gurjar community, while also providing programmatic benefits to the Jatav community, in order to compensate this community for the loss of political representation. While traditional distribution and commerce in retail and wholesale sectors remain very much in the hands of the urban upper-caste communities, namely the Baniyas, upwardly mobile landed groups from non-upper caste backgrounds have profited enormously from urban economic expansion.¹⁶¹ In particular, these communities have reaped great benefit from the boom in real estate and transport.¹⁶² They also play a key role as strongmen-contractors in providing protection and labour. Many Gurjars work as contractors and are able to tap into a community network in real estate and its ancillary activities.

The members of Gurjar community have contacts in positions of advantage in the provision of building materials, including bricks, and to facilitate smooth progress in construction in real estate.¹⁶³ Another key element of the community network is the support to the small landholders who are often unable to stand up to large real-estate operators in the matter of land transfers. By agitating on behalf of the small-holders, they try to ensure that the land holders receive fair compensation for their land when it is sold. The tactics used to get the compensation are mainly agitational, as these networks double as protection groups and are able to block construction work and prevent the real-estate companies from getting on with their jobs.¹⁶⁴ However, under the BSP Government, it was very hard to impede the work of these real-estate companies because the police were able to suppress the protection gangs more effectively. The police stepped in on behalf of the large real-estate firms, which enjoyed the patronage of the state government.¹⁶⁵ Although these actions by the BSP Government did

¹⁶¹ See Barbara Harriss-White, *India Working* (2003).

¹⁶² Interview with Gilles Vernier, Khan Chacha, Khan Market, New Delhi. 25th September, 2013.

¹⁶³ Interview with SK Mishra, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad. 30th September, 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Ravi Singh Yadav, Margshree Farms, Barauli Aheer, Agra, 3rd June, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Interview RP Singh Yadav, *Aaj* Newspaper Head Office, Agra. 27th November, 2012.

affect the community networks, the Gurjar community also benefited and prospered from the real-estate boom experienced by the city.

The BSP provided economic opportunities not available under the Samajwadi Party, which lacks a local power base and favoured Yadavs and Muslims. The BJP, on the other hand, remains controlled by upper-caste communities which were historically lukewarm in their attitude towards the aspirations of the Gurjar community. The BSP required allies with economic resources and established social networks necessary for the rapid implementation of its urban development policies. Gurjar political entrepreneurs found an ideal patron in the BSP state government, which provided discretionary tenders and lucrative opportunities in the real-estate, construction and allied industries. These tenders were awarded in return for Gurjar patronage of poor Jatavs, who lacked the start-up capital or legacy of landownership necessary for successful entry into real-estate and capital markets. The Gurjars were awarded patronage and in turn they had to provide poor Jatavs patronage.

4.6. State-led urban development and the enduring power of intermediate elites

The BSP accommodated Gurjar intermediate elites and created an intermediate urban regime that combined commercial elites, intermediate classes, and the petty bourgeois cadre who are the leaders and sub-leaders of the party's core constituency.

Intermediate elites yield considerable political influence, and are able to deploy informal networks and relationships with the agents of state in order to retain economic niches (Harriss-White, 2003, 42-50). While Harriss-White uses the example of intermediate classes who dominate the transport industry in Tamil Nadu, the Intermediate Regime model can effectively be applied to the study of caste politics in western Uttar Pradesh. The market in licenses and tenders is institutionalised and regulated by "informal economy of the powerful" (Harriss-White, 2006). These informal networks erect barriers to entry and access. Moreover, the relative scarcity of resources in a Third World nation like India, means that the state plays a crucial role in economic growth, as it provides the necessary economies of scale, and social overhead capital (Harriss-White, 2003, 44).

The BSP posted its most trusted bureaucratic aides to the apex of decision-making in the NOIDA, Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA development authorities. The Chief Minister's brother, Anand Kumar, a clerk in the NOIDA development authority, enjoyed considerable influence and close ties with construction conglomerates with business interests in the region.¹⁶⁶ A senior and trusted Dalit

¹⁶⁶ Interview with RB Singh Yadav, Agra, 23rd November, 2012.

civil servant, Shashi Bhushan Lal Susheel, was posted as the District Magistrate of Ghaziabad.¹⁶⁷ The Chief Minister, Mayawati, enabled ministers and incorporated district elites from the Gurjar community to avail of contracts and tenders and rent-seek on the condition that Dalits were provided a significant proportion of the rents generated from pro-business policies. These groups were affiliated with urban development initiatives implemented by the NOIDA, GNIDA and YEIDA authorities. This included the construction of the expressway, ancillary public infrastructure projects, and commercial real-estate projects. The BSP's political effectiveness depended on the political cooperation of local elites, in particularly those from the Gurjar community.

Through its pragmatic politics of accommodation and compromise with landowners, whose social and material interests have historically clashed with those of the Jatav community, the BSP was able to ensure the successful implementation of affordable housing projects for Dalits in Ghaziabad's urban core along the Grand Trunk Road. It could also ensure the relatively conflict-free implementation of urban development projects and the construction of elite urban townships in these peri-urban constituencies along the Yamuna Expressway. These policies were successfully implemented because of the BSP's ability to take advantage of the economic resources, strategic political leverage, and the social networks enjoyed by Gurjar landowners and urban entrepreneurs alike. Gajraj Nagar was placed in charge of the office which facilitated the payment of compensation for displaced farmers.¹⁶⁸ An extract written by an investigative journalist provides valuable qualitative data on Gajraj Nagar's patronage networks:

The headman's house towers three storeys, plus a turret. Freshly painted in pink and white, it is impossible to miss. Of course, most houses in Badalpur look big to the city-dweller, even if the ground floor is a courtyard with two buffaloes and a Maruti car. Above the Pradhan's house no party flag flies, but the Toyota with tinted windows and rooftop light makes its own statement – as does the crowd of supplicants at the office near the gate. Pradhan Bhim Singh Nagar has gone to settle a dispute between two brothers, says his "younger brother", Gajraj. This younger Nagar's wife is the *zila panchayat* head, and he himself is, like so many in this village, in the "building business (Raote, 2012, 1).

Badalpur is in peri-urban Dadri district. In urban Ghaziabad, on the other hand, Gurjar patrons like Madan Bhaiyya, facilitated the construction of low-income colonies for new Dalit-Bahujan migrants

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Avinash Kumar, New Delhi, 6th November, 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 28th September, 2013.

to the city. The BSP state government relied on this Gurjar patron to ensure the rapid construction of 210 affordable housing colonies in the city.¹⁶⁹

The Gurjar dominant castes could exploit their organisational linkages in order to also provide land for Dalit migrants to construct Low-Income Colonies along the Hindon floodplain and in the other areas where vacant land was less commercially lucrative. In the manner that the legendary politicians like Richard Daley of Chicago used Great Society funding to allocate affordable yet segregated housing projects to Southern Blacks migrating to the Windy City (Eerie, 1989). In Ghaziabad, the reciprocal governing arrangements between Gurjar businessmen and Jatav bureaucrat and politicians enabled the state government to implement its pro-business policies. There was limited opposition from local communities who may otherwise have perceived the BSP's policies as unfair and disadvantageous. High levels of economic growth was crucial for the BSP to forge and sustain a "coalition of the extremes" where the party's Dalit voters elected BSP candidates wealthy businessmen from traditional elites, upwardly mobile poor Brahmins, Muslims and Gurjars.

By providing Gurjars with strategic commercial and political positions, the BSP was able to accommodate a broad-based coalition of builders and farmers into its urbanisation agenda. The local Gurjar community then implemented the pro-business policies in conjunction with the state government in a manner that greatly pleased external investors and property developers. The Jatav community continued to control the strategic offices of engineers, planners, administrators and surveyors on behalf of the Development Authority, District Magistrate, and Revenue bodies in the region. This enabled them to co-ordinate projects on behalf of the BSP state government in Lucknow. They ensured that Gurjar businessmen and politicians were provided with the extremely lucrative tenders and construction contracts in the National Capital Region.

It was mutually understood that, as reciprocation for the favours granted, Gurjar entrepreneurs would hire Jatavs as sub-contractors and skilled workmen, and also ensure the construction of low-income housing projects for Jatav migrants from the countryside.¹⁷⁰ These governing arrangements survived the BSP's ouster in the UP assembly elections because of the direct personal links now established between Gurjar entrepreneurs, political leaders and Dalit bureaucrats at local levels of government. However, both Gurjar and Jatav networks have been disrupted and superseded by Yadav government officials and political entrepreneurs on deputation from the state government in Lucknow. Nonetheless, the SP lacks a strong local political constituency to effectively displace the Gurjar-Dalit

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Akash Vashisht, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, 14th September, 2013.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 25th September, 2013.

networks established by the BSP. Consequently, the BSP has retained considerable appeal for the Gurjar community. As the BSP controls the great majority of assembly seats and positions of power and influence within the local development authority even when the BSP no longer matters in state-wide office, it remains a viable and lucrative political option for political entrepreneurs from sub-elite and neo-dominant communities like the Gurjars. Significantly, Gurjar political actors were involved in the processes of urbanisation from top to bottom.¹⁷¹

The BSP's electoral alliances enabled the party to make inroads into local politics as well. Seven of the nine legislators in Ghaziabad, NOIDA and Greater NOIDA are from the BSP. Moreover, the BSP is the second largest party in the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation, with 22 councillors out of 80.¹⁷² The BJP retained control over the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation with 35 councillors and also emerged victorious in the mayoral elections. Moreover, in the recently concluded district elections, the BSP won seven seats, while the Samajwadi Party won five and the BJP won four.

The BSP has been more successful in accommodating upper-caste and Gurjar political patrons, and therefore been able to secure political dominance in the National Capital Region. Nonetheless, the BJP remains the strongest party in the city centre, which is an elite bastion. These results mirror the patterns of electoral representation in Agra, as the BSP has emerged as the main challenger to the BJP's dominance in the Municipal Corporations, and the single largest party in the District Councils, which represent the larger urban agglomeration rather than the city's urban core. Recent migrants are transforming the political terrain in Ghaziabad as they have done in Agra, transforming the rapidly growing urban peripheries into BSP bastions. The urban core remains in elite-dominated primary cities while the secondary cities of Agra and Ghaziabad are emerging as BSP strongholds.

The BSP relied on Gurjar political entrepreneurs to facilitate these changes. Gurjar entrepreneurs provide Dalits with sub-contracts and employment on public infrastructure and private real-estate projects. The Gurjar patrons also provided affordable land parcels and facilitated the construction of low-income housing complexes, which provided Dalit migrants with security of tenure and a permanent urban foothold. In a testament to the resilience of the BSP's power networks in the city, these neighbourhoods remain authorised, and their legality has not been challenged by the new administration. The BSP's political networks remain intact to date.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 25th September, 2013.

¹⁷² Interview with Akash Vashisht, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, 17th September, 2013.

4.7. The Paras Consortium: A Case-Study in Gurjar social mobility

The story of the Paras Consortium is illustrative of social mobility in the NCR. The Gurjar community of Ghaziabad are understandably proud of this family enterprise which has considerably expanded its portfolio since the company's incorporation in 1987. The small enterprise initially began as a dairy run by Ved Ram Bhatti of Ghaziabad. He worked in the ancestral profession of cattle-grazing and supplemented his income with a small dairy.

As the urban economy expanded in the early 1990s, the Paras consortium was also able to expand. Ved Ram's sons, utilised caste networks with Gurjar small-business owners and suppliers across the region in order to expand its market share. These networks ensure the creation of supply chains and backward and forward linkages which minimise transaction costs and thereby enhance efficiency. These are networks based primarily on trust, and verbal assurance. There is no need for a written contract. Such high levels of interpersonal trust are possible because of dense kinship ties amongst the closely Gurjar community, which is organised according to clans commanded by hereditary headmen.

Consequently, there is little scope for cheating and free-riding within these circumstances. Such actions would result in ostracism and exclusion from the commercial networks controlled by community elites. In an interview to the *Financial Express*, Gajinder Nagar, the eldest brother, hints at the power of informal kinship networks. These explain the company's success in production and distribution of perishable milk products to urban consumers. The efficiency of these operations which must reach urban consumers in a sprawling metropolitan region is impressive. The existing clan and kinship networks have been deployed to enable the Paras consortium to expand out of the milk business into more lucrative commodities. As the *Financial Express* reports:

For [expansion beyond the dairy business], it used its existing retail network and roots in the villages. For instance, it entered into the ghee market making use of the surplus milk produced during the winter season (September-March) when the milk yield is good. "Since we have a dedicated milk supply through village [networks] we utilise excess production in making ghee and other milk products," explains Mr Gajinder Kumar (*The Financial Express*, 22nd June, 2002).

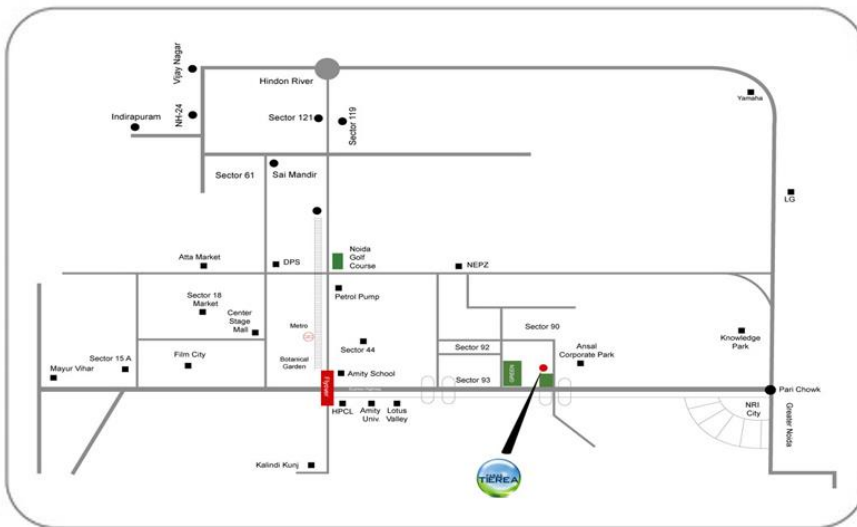
Paras has achieved considerable prosperity in nearly three decades. Not only has the company become one of the largest dairy suppliers in the Capital, it has also entered the export market, supplying its products to the USA, Europe, Egypt and Bangladesh. Having expanded in the dairy business, the

Paras Consortium was created to benefit from the real-estate boom emanating out of the capital in the early 2000s. Surendra Nagar, one the younger sons of the family, also joined the BSP, where he was elected as Member of Parliament from Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Consequently, the Paras Consortium was in a favourable position when the BSP assumed power in 2007. Having already constructed industrial projects in the state, the Consortium had the experience necessary to acquire land without political hurdles. Once more, the fact that this was a Gurjar company, with deep roots in the local countryside, enabled the Consortium to win over the trust of the local people. This greatly reduced risks and transaction costs associated with real-estate investments in the region. Consequently, the company also attracted partners from overseas and other parts of India, eager to take advantage of the BSP's pro-business policies. The National Capital Region is the favoured investment destination in entire state, and the Paras Consortium was placed in an extremely strategic position. With a Member of Parliament in the family and links with BSP politicians, the company had developed close relationships with senior state politicians in Lucknow. As a local enterprise with decades of commercial experience, the company also had access to local kinship and commercial networks, which enabled them to broker real-estate and construction deals with local Gurjar, Tyagi and Jat farmers. This enabled construction and real-estate projects to proceed with minimal conflict.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

Map. 4.2. The Location of the Paras Project Adjacent to the NODIA Expressway and the Ansal Corporate Park are a testimony to the company's favourable links with the BSP, which developed these urban areas on a Centrally Planned, Public-Private-Partnership Framework. The neighbourhoods around Indirapuram (top-left corner) in Ghaziabad were similarly transformed by urban development and real estate projects. Consequently, Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA are still held by the BSP.



Source: The Paras Consortium.

THE BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY, URBAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTE POLITICS IN AGRA
AND GHAZIABAD, 2007-2013.

Table 4.1. A list of the most important Gurjar patrons in the BSP from the National Capital Region.

Name	Occupation	Position awarded	Sphere of Influence	Declared Net Worth in Rupees
Surendra Nagar	Realtor and heir to the Paras Real-estate and Dairy Consortium	Member of Parliament for Gautam Buddh Nagar	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi, Gurgaon.	492,084,300
Satveer Singh Gurjar	Transporter, Cultivator and Politician	Member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly (MLA), Greater Noida	Greater NOIDA, NOIDA and Ghaziabad.	9,748,182
Ved Ram Bhatti	Agriculture	MLA from Jewar	Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, NOIDA, and Jewar	31,914,356
Satish Awana	Businessmen (owns 12 companies) and hereditary headman of Harolla Village	Candidate for the Member of Parliament, Gautam Buddh Nagar (replaced Surendra Nagar in 2014)	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi, Gurgaon.	620,000,000
Anil Awana	Businessman	Member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council, President of the Uttar Pradesh Water Authority.	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi.	11,878,200
Usha Awana	Businesswoman	President of Gautam Buddh Nagar District Council	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi.	11,878,200
Gajraj Nagar	Agriculturalist and Realtor.	President of the Land Acquisition Compensation Board.	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi.	N/A
Bhim Singh Nagar (Brother of Garraj)	Agriculturalist and Realtor	Hereditary Headman of Badalpur Village (Mayawati's ancestral home).	NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA, New Delhi.	N/A

4.8. Conclusion

In Ghaziabad, the BSP state government was also able to leverage its pro-business agenda by using an expanded resource base to sustain an overarching electoral coalition. The BSP chose to make tactical alliances with upwardly mobile but historically disadvantaged businessmen. Gurjar-dominated commercial networks provide the BSP the chance to remain electorally viable in urban politics. Access to major urban centres is extremely important for a political party, because this is where it finds the resources and social networks that can not only provide finance, but also the political space for mobilisation.

Given its control of state power, the BSP was able to leverage these benefits as conditional on their ability to provide votes from the Gurjar community while also providing resources to important constituencies of the BSP. This involved developing close connections with pro-BSP bureaucrats in important local offices that would help provide information, award tenders and planning permissions. The pro-business environment under the BSP, also enabled the real-estate industry to thrive. The real-estate industry has been particularly important for the Gurjar community, as it has enabled sections of this pastoral community to thrive in the modern economy, especially as wealthy Gurjars provide patronage to poorer members of their community. In return for the benefits of aligning with the BSP, the Gurjar political leaders and contractors in the party were expected to provide employment and sub-contracts to the Jatav community.¹⁷³

Political conflicts around land acquisition represent the singularly most immense hurdle to urban development and industrialisation in India. Large private corporations balk at investing in the countryside given the level of political instability and commercial uncertainty created by political conflicts around land acquisition. The BSP, like any other effective political party, must react to these opposing social facts and challenges in the context of high levels of market-based growth. It must also respond to the challenges produced by the party's multi-ethnic transformation. Consequently, the party's electoral success in Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA provides an illuminating case-study. It is particularly interesting for any scholar interested in the nascent discipline of political geography.

¹⁷³ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Head Office, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad. 1st September, 2013.

Part III: The BSP Bonarpartism the bureaucracy and socio-economic change in Agra and Ghaziabad

The manner in which the BSP state government directed the state's senior bureaucrats reflected the party's political priorities and ideological preference towards a powerful centralised bureaucracy as the key instrument of social change. In sharp contrast to the Samajwadi Party, the BSP Chief Minister used senior bureaucrats and managerial elites to concentrate political power in a top-down, authoritarian fashion. This is in keeping with the BSP's origins in BAMCEF, a trade union representing Dalit, Backward and non-Hindu employees of the central and state government. It also reflects the statist ideology of the party's founder Kanshi Ram, who viewed using the democratic process as the best means of acquiring Indian state power. Having obtained power through the ballot, the educated Dalit-Bahujan vanguard at the helm of the political power could then use the state apparatus to transform society and dissolve the Hindu caste order (Pai, 2009). In reality, the BSP made important compromises from the early 2000s onwards, including a shift away from state socialism and its ideological antipathy towards Hindu upper castes. Nonetheless, the BSP's political opportunism should not be read as an abandonment of its founding ideology.

Douglas North makes an important point the central role of ideological legitimacy as an enabler of collective action:

Ideas and ideologies matter and institutions play a major role in determining just how much they matter. Ideas and ideologies shape the subjective mental constructs that individuals use to interpret the world around them and make choices. People's perception that the system is fair and just reduces costs. Equally the perception that the system is unjust raises the costs. Ideologies mediate the very perception of relative prices, thus assuming a partly autonomous role in institutional change. By influencing the perceived costs of institutional change and the choices individuals make, ideology has the direct impact on institutional change. (North cited in Holbig, 2006, 2).

Consequently, it is also possible to see parallels between the BSP's ideological position towards the state and the ideological position adopted in Socialist nations. As Heike Holbig observes, Socialist countries construct statecraft based on a model which combines top-down models of authority based on the power a centralised party leadership combined with popular support gained from a narrative of bottom-up empowerment. This system works to construct the:

[...the] legitimization of a hierarchically downwards-oriented system of power and command in the name of a 'real' popular sovereignty. Official communist ideology thus transforms the principle of the sovereignty of the people into the sovereignty of the proletariat (on the basis of historical mission), and then, in a second step, the latter is transformed into the sovereignty of the party (on the basis of its specific knowledge), which confers on it the role of 'vanguard'. In this way a 'sovereign prince' [i.e., a sovereign party] is created though the 'modern' principles of [democratic] legitimization are ideologically preserved. (Holbig, 2006, 12).

Chapters Five and Six will focus on the implications of the BSP's statecraft on economic activity and urban policing strategies in Agra and Ghaziabad. These chapters will examine the manner in which the construction of pro-business regimes and urban policing strategies reflected the Dalit party's attempts to alter the balance of power in both cities. They reflect on the extent to which the BSP succeeded in providing Dalits with unprecedented access state-controlled economic resources, and also the extent to which urban social relations was altered as the state's police force took on the informal networks of force and violence which structure political power in urban Uttar Pradesh.

The following chapters will examine the manner in which an empowered bureaucracy undermined the informal dominance of landed elites. Under a Dalit-led state government, political patrons from dominant communities, who undermined the state's monopoly over violence, lost their privileges and control over patronage networks. Despite a significant restoration of these shadow networks under the Samajwadi Party, the BSP centralised economic activity and policing. Dalits (mainly Jatavs) gained unprecedented access to the state. This access has been converted into control over economic activity and insulation from caste-based violence. The irreversibility of such measures instituted irrevocable changes for urban social relations in Agra and Ghaziabad.

5. The BSP state government and the construction of a pro-business regime

5.1. Introduction: The Political Construction of Pro-Business Regimes

This chapter explores the political processes behind the construction of the BSP government's expansive promotion of corporate economic activity in Agra and Ghaziabad. This chapter is centred on five main arguments. Firstly, the BSP state government promoted the corporate economy in both Agra and Ghaziabad, with a particular emphasis on corporate participation in urban redevelopment. These converged with the party's electoral interests in both urban areas, and relate to aim of facilitating economic growth. Growth-facilitation measures correspond with the stratagem of other Indian state governments (Manor, 2009). Secondly, the state government tailored its pro-business strategies to suit the distinct political economies of Agra and the National Capital Region. The third argument concerns the state government's particular emphasis on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and institutionalised arrangements with big business and corporate houses based outside Uttar Pradesh. These were conceived in Lucknow and implemented by the BSP's local political entrepreneurs in each city. Fourthly, The BSP's policies accentuated the divide between the Corporate Economy and the Local Economy. Finally, this chapter argues, the promotion of the corporate economy and the attempted marginalisation of the local economy reflected the state government's political priorities, as the Public Private Partnerships and rent-sharing arrangements emphasised the promotion of entrepreneurship amongst Dalits.

In Ghaziabad, as with the rest of the NCR, the BSP cultivated and instituted pro-business arrangements through the co-option of large-scale entrepreneurs and corporate groups, who worked closely with senior government officials in the development authority to facilitate a major real-estate boom. The state government relied on upper castes and wealthy intermediate castes to implement the BSP's pro-business agenda. Businessmen from these communities were the only ones who possessed sufficient start-up capital to execute such lucrative projects; however, in return for benefitting for accommodation into the state government's pro-business regimes in the city, these businessmen provided patronage, sub-contracts and significant employment to Dalit entrepreneurs. This ensured significant material gains for the Jatav community, which gained unprecedented access to the rapid expansion of economic activity in the National Capital Region.

In Agra, the BSP's industrial policy focused on promoting the leather industry, in order to ensure prosperity and enable Dalit artisans to move up the value chain in the industry. These policies catered to the economy interests of Dalit artisans and small-businessmen in an industry where the most

lucrative credit and export markets remained in the hands of Bania and Panjabi wholesalers and distributors.

The BSP achieved partial success and ensured appreciable gains to the Jatavs engaged in leatherwork. Nonetheless, major projects like the BSP's shoe distribution centre and Leather Park faced financial shortfalls and official neglect once the BSP lost power in Lucknow. Jatav entrepreneurs had also made significant and unprecedented access to the real-estate industry in Agra. These gains have outlived the BSP, even if regime change worked to curtail Jatav privilege to some extent. Policies such as the privatisation of Torrent Power, the creation of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, the real-estate development along the Inner Ring Road project in Agra were not been officially reversed by the new government, but some were allowed to fall into disrepair. Nonetheless, the contacts, commercial expertise and administrative experience enjoyed by both Dalit entrepreneurs and bureaucrats ensures continued access to collaborative arrangements between business and the local state in both cities.

However, the pro-business regime instituted by the BSP state government suffered considerable disruption following the 2012 elections, as entrepreneurs and officials from the Samajwadi Party sought to corner rent-generating activities. A prime example of disruption is in the Inner Ring Road project. The incoming government cancelled the tender awarded to the Inner Ring Road project, awarded to the Jaypee group, but then failed to find a new bidder. Consequently, the findings for paper, indicate the centrality of political leadership as a key driver of industrial policy in the Indian context. The manner in which the BSP government deployed government officials, and transferred resources to favoured social groups reflects the political compulsions inherent in sustaining a multi-ethnic electoral coalition while also privileging its core Dalit electoral constituency. Additionally, the promotion of corporate interests while marginalising traditional upper-caste elites, also reflected the need to find a source of revenue and economic resources, independent of the traditional economic monopolies which privilege mercantile communities and systematically exclude Dalits across urban North India.

5.2. The BSP and the institutionalisation of a pro-business administration

Atul Kohli argues that “growth acceleration in India is mainly a product of the state's embrace of economic growth as a priority goal” (Kohli, 2009, 146). Kohli contrasts a pro-market strategy with pro-business policies. While a pro-market strategy draws inspiration from neo-classical economic

theory, a pro-business strategy emerges from real-world economic successes of South East Asian economies since the late 1970s (Kohli, 2006, 1253).

The latter strategy also supports considerable state intervention in favour of established business houses. This involves a convergence in the interest of between the state and big business a way that combines private profit with statist intervention in the political economy. The instruments of the developmental state are committed to the single-minded pursuit of economic growth. This involves the features of a repressive state where labour militancy is repressed in favour of the interest of business-owners. Some such states also involve significant price distortions with regards to the market value of certain essential commodities (Ibid.). These distortions are brought about when political elites use the instruments of government to transfer resources to favoured groups in the private sector. The central issues concern the “state’s goals and capacities, expressed in the institutionalised relationship between the state and the private sector” (Kohli, 2009, 149).

Despite the resistance of local elites documented in the previous chapter, the BSP has been able to make significant interventions in the local political economy of both urban areas. This was particularly the case in Ghaziabad, where the expanded resource base provided the material base for parallel networks of brokers and clients which undermined the power of established political power networks. The BSP attempted similar interventions in Agra, especially in the energy and leather industries. In both cities, the focus of the interventions involved major giveaways to big business houses who were able to corner lucrative public resources including land, and in Agra the entire distribution network for electricity supply.

In both cities, there was also an emphasis on ensuring that a portion of resources were channelled towards the Dalits, particularly the Jatavs. In Agra, this was most significantly demonstrated by tax breaks, exemptions and loans to the Jatav-dominated leather industry, as well as the establishment of a shoe wholesale centre that sought to undercut the “Bania” monopoly over the distribution networks in the leather industry. Contractors awarded government contracts for infrastructure and housing projects were also expected to hire Jatav labour and subcontractors. This was possible in Agra, because the local Jatav community is a position of power, and has sufficiently prosperous elite that is in a position to provide patronage to poorer Dalits. In Ghaziabad, the BSP succeeded in coopting patrons from local elite groups, who were then able to provide patronage to Dalits.

The BSP began an incomplete transformation of the political economies of the two cities away from the *local economy* and towards the *corporate economy*. In the local economy, businesses garner

competitive efficiency through informal networks reinforced by ties of kinship, caste and neighbourhood. They obtain licenses, scarce resources and public goods from the state through long-standing ties with local officials. This form of economic activity constitutes what Harriss-White describes as the “informal economic order” (Harriss-White, 2006). The BSP’s pro-business policies were able to disrupt the commercial activities of these close-knit networks. The BSP sought to capture these networks, and monopolise channels of distribution through a co-ordination of the state bureaucracy and through well-crafted alliances with certain favoured entrepreneurs. In particular, the BSP used the power of big business to supplant these city-wide networks.

The centralised Bonarpartist style of the BSP state administration facilitated the entry of these favoured executives into formal and informal party structures. Ms. Mayawati appeared to sometimes prefer executives and functionaries who are mainly non-Dalit, and are often business tycoons to begin with. These men were useful sources of economic and social capital, and they are also wholly dependent on her, lacking independent power bases of their own. They represented the gradual professionalisation of the party, as the formal party structure of the BSP moved from a cadre-based social movement to a party composed of professional politicians who are selected based on their ability to bring funds and non-Dalit constituencies into the Dalit fold. These arrangements were politically favourable for the Chief Minister, Mayawati, and these politicians who have no power bases of their own and therefore little scope to challenge her autocratic leadership.¹⁷⁴

Although, bureaucrats are political actors under any political administration, the manner in which the political elites from the BSP and its arch-rival Samajwadi Party (SP) steer, direct and control their bureaucrats differs considerably. In both regimes, bureaucrats are expected to do the bidding of their political masters. Moreover, bureaucrats act as gatekeepers and brokers. However, under the BSP, this brokerage network operated through a top-down manner. Under the SP, they work alongside and through localised brokerage networks. While both political parties blurred the boundaries between the formal and the informal state, it was the BSP which has far greater interest in bringing the local economy under the state government’s chain of command. This was because its core constituency, the Dalits, faced considerable barriers to entry into the credit networks of the informal economy of urban elites.

The BSP placed its own loyal officials in power. They were then able to broker the process of urban development in infrastructure and vital services on behalf of the state government. They implemented

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Arjun Savedia, private home, April 18th 2013.

the process of urban expansion that was steered by the state government. Moreover, the BSP government state policies also worked to stifle trade union activity. Dalit activists associated with the BSP argue that the Communist-affiliated trade union movement is completely dominated by Brahmins and therefore insensitive to the need of the mainly lower-caste working poor. “Comrade” BK Tripathi, a trade union official in charge of the heavily industrialised Ghaziabad urban area disagrees. Instead, he counters that caste divisions has undermined the labour movement and social solidarity in the state. Moreover, he argues that the BSP was more concerned about extracting rents from big business and, therefore, wholly willing to suppress trade union activity. According to Mr Tripathi:

A trade union requires permission from the District Labour Commissioner before it can hold a unionisation drive at a workplace. However, the BSP government decreed that the employer should double up as the representative of the Labour Commissioner. Consequently, it was impossible to hold any form of unionisation drive in any factory. The BSP government gave us no space to organise.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, in Agra, the BSP government clashed with the unions of public sector employees of the state-owned electricity company. The BSP’s institutional arrangements involved the state government working in conjunction with favoured private sector conglomerates.¹⁷⁶ This argument is certainly confirmed by the pro-business policies the BSP adopted in the context of urban development in Agra and Ghaziabad. The BSP formed strategic partnerships with major business houses and conglomerates in order to make significant interventions in the local economies of the two urban areas. The state government’s policies were particularly effective in altering the balance of power between different communities in the two cities. The BSP’s pro-business stance made sense from the perspective of Dalit empowerment.

The BSP’s political strategies appears to converge with the analytical prospects of academics, Devesh Kapur, Chandra Prasad, Lant Pritchett and Shyam Babu. Based on extensive surveys on the impact of market-based growth on Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, the researchers expressed unqualified support for economic liberalisation and market-based growth. According to these authors the “market reform era” ensured unprecedented prosperity for UP’s Dalits, especially in the urbanised western regions of the state. This is because:

¹⁷⁵ Interview with BK Tripathi, Communist Party of India Office, New Delhi, 20th November 2012.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with BK Tripathi, Communist Party of India Office, New Delhi, 20th November 2012.

Prosperity raised the standard of living, and the social and cultural fabric of the village has changed, much for the better. Debates about the effects of economic reforms on inequality in India based on changes in consumption inequality have so far been completely missing these much larger changes in social and cognitive inequality. The good life, as Hegel argued, is fundamentally dependent on being held in regard by others and approval and recognition are crucial to this. The arrival of modernity in Western societies ruptured existing social hierarchies, replacing them with a universal language (even if not practice) of dignity and self-respect. In India questions of dignity, self-respect and humiliation were at the core of the nationalist discourse. But as Gopal Guru (2009: 4) has perceptively argued while Indian nationalists were deeply cognizant of the racial humiliations resulting from colonisation, they were much less so over caste based humiliations. Thus it was —Janus-faced: externally radical but internally conservative — something Ambedkar clearly saw in Congressmen when he called them —political radicals and social Tories (Kapur et al, 2010, 27).

Consequently, there is an important ideological dimension to BSP's pro-business regimes in Agra and Ghaziabad. The BSP's embrace of market-based growth appears to involve a conscious effort to promote a caste-neutral corporate economy in order to further undermine the exclusionary impact of caste-based economic activity which are dominated by caste networks and informal collusion between urban economic elites and the local state.

5.3. From Land to Real Estate: The Political Consequences of the BSP's pro-business policies in Ghaziabad

In Ghaziabad, the BSP was successful in winning over the support of the city's business elite. The BSP's success, even in the 2012 state assembly elections, in the National Capital Region indicates the extent to which market-based growth matters for successful re-election in India's competitive polity. Ghaziabad is a particularly noteworthy example, because the party had a negligible base there up until it assumed power in 2007. Within five years the city was transformed into a BSP bastion.

Economic liberalisation and market-based growth provides the basis for both clientelistic exchange and the sort of programmatic benefits derived from market-based growth that Indian voters have come to expect from their politicians. Consequently, aside from the greatly expanded resource base offered by the city, the BSP's core constituency would have little reason to oppose pro-business policies that greatly pushed for urban expansion.

Moreover, in Ghaziabad, the BSP's pro-business policies were extremely successful in winning over both its core vote of landless lower castes and landed dominant castes, even as these two communities have often had mutually antagonistic relations, and are still separated by caste and class prejudice. Nonetheless, as a local Gurjar politician observes:

The BSP state government promoted urbanisation in the districts of NOIDA, Greater NOIDA and Ghaziabad and has consolidated itself electorally. There was widespread anger against the rise of the Jatavs in other areas of Uttar Pradesh because people felt the Jatavs had got ahead while nobody else had benefited...here, however, enough people felt they benefited from the construction and urban development projects of the BSP.¹⁷⁷

While the BSP government embarked on a policy that was friendly to real-estate interests, it appointed Gajraj Nagar, a Gurjar political actor, as the chairman of the District Agricultural Board.¹⁷⁸ This enabled him to play an extremely important role in steering the allocation of compensation funds to farmers. The Gurjars, Banias, Panjabi Khattris, Brahmins and Tyagis who have been accommodated into the local party structure of the BSP benefitted greatly from the perquisites of patronage controlled by the BSP government once the party came to power.¹⁷⁹ The policy of public-private partnerships provided sufficient resources to buy over otherwise hostile social groups. The state government played an active role in facilitating this boom. For this, the Mayawati regime won considerably vocal support from an extremely unlikely constituency, the Indian financial press. Here is an example from a noted business commentator:

Take, for example, what Mayawati has done commercially for [the National Capital Region around Delhi] ...Beginning with the just-concluded F1 race – the first ever in this country and on a world-class track – and working backwards, she has progressively worked to enhance the commercial value of real estate. There are no aggregate figures on hand, but there are sufficient anecdotal stories to reveal how the middle class that was smart enough to invest in the early stages has recovered their investment many, many times over... To be sure, the last five years have coincided with the best years ever of the Indian economy, but even a cursory visit to the area will reveal the imprimatur of the state government” (Padmanabhan, 2012, 1).

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Krishna Kant Singh, Hub Properties, Greater Noida, 1st September 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Satish Awaana, Head Office, 23rd September 2013.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Vijay Paliwal, New Delhi, 25th May 2013.

The co-ordination was institutionalised through the creation of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA). This idea of planned townships created with the explicitly pro-business actions of the state, exemplified in the provision of land, has important parallels with the settlement of both NOIDA and Ghaziabad. These urban centres were populated with explicit giveaways to major industrial houses as part of the creation of an Export Promotion Zone by the Indian central government in 1987. The unelected YEIDA is modelled on the lines of the New Okla. Industrial Development Authority and the Ghaziabad Development Authority. Both these bodies are the primary owners of land and are the most important agencies in determining real estate expansion in their respective urban areas.¹⁸⁰ These organisations are controlled by the state government, and the chairpersons of these authorities are invariably bureaucrats whose appointments are highly political. The BSP worked to facilitate high-end rent-seeking. As a property broker and local politician, Advocate Manish Gurjar, observed:

Corruption begins at the planning process. This is because business needs permission from various sections of the bureaucracy in order to get work done. The BSP facilitated a major property boom in the districts of Gautam Buddh Nagar and Ghaziabad. The state government's chosen officials worked out under the table payments for builders. Given that business people invested so much money in the region, they expected their work to be done on time. That was actually what happened. Under the BSP there was a system of organised corruption controlled from the top of party leadership and functioning very effectively through a well-organised bureaucratic framework.¹⁸¹

However, Surendra Bhati, who is from a farming family, echoed the sentiments of his community, when he argued that on balance the building boom was beneficial for their interests:

There is nothing really to be earned from farming any more. You cannot earn a decent income and in these days of high expectations, people want to educate their children and move to the cities, not till the soil. When there is a boom in real estate and construction then there is a demand for jobs that allow for a better income. If don't have much land or capital you can train as carpenter, or a plumber and earn some money. If you do have some capital to begin with and some contacts, you can become a supplier. You can

¹⁸⁰ Interview, Satish Awaana, 8th August, 2013.

¹⁸¹ Interview, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad 21st August, 2013.

become a supplier of building materials and labour, all of which comes into very high demand with urban development and construction.¹⁸²

On the other hand, economic growth and strong state-business ties provided this area with the resources for broad-based programmatic agenda. In Ghaziabad, the economic boom emanating out of Delhi allowed the party to provide benefits across the board and provided the political space to sustain a rainbow electoral alliance. The growth-generating pro-business policies that provided benefits across the board to a wide-range of constituencies from Bania businessmen, Balmiki slum-dwellers, and Gurjar farmers, all of whom became important BSP constituencies as a result. This alliance was held together by the resources provided by wealthy patrons, real-estate developers and political brokers like Suresh Bansal and Ponty Chadha. Businesspeople who act as major political patrons provide independent resources for politicians and they are then chosen as candidates because they provide political parties with the necessary resources to run elections.¹⁸³

Ponty Chadha donated substantially to the BSP's party funds and this provided him with the scope to determine the entire liquor policy of the state. More importantly, he played a very important role in the real estate development of the NOIDA and Ghaziabad area. He was also provided with prime acres of greenfield lands, whose land use was changed so that his Wave city centre and real-estate consortium could be expanded. Similarly, Mr Bansal, the legislator from Ghaziabad played an extremely important role in the development of the real-estate infrastructure on some of the most lucrative land in Ghaziabad. He also used his contacts with the bureaucracy to channel resources into Dalit neighbourhoods, and ensured that Dalits were given sub-contracts and jobs in the real estate industry. In return, he was able to consolidate his position as one of the wealthiest real-estate developers and important politicians in Ghaziabad.

In Ghaziabad, all the BSP's most important political leaders in the area are selected from local elite groups in order to tap into the local networks of patron-client relations. All members of these groups are also involved in some way in the real-estate industry. Real estate provides an effective and quick source of revenue for state governments and also a means of generating growth and jobs for landless labour. Local leaders from the Gurjar community played a crucial role in the creation of these networks of entrepreneurship and they facilitated the work of senior leaders and senior companies for local patterns of land use and development.

¹⁸² Interview, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad, 21st August, 2013.

¹⁸³ Interview, Satish Awaana, Office, Ghaziabad, 23rd September, 2013.

The promotion of economic growth is also as much about rent-seeking as it is about expanding the resource base for patronage and programmatic policies. Business groups must factor in payments to political groups in order to continue their business. Under the BSP, rent-seeking was organised in a very systematic manner. Manish Gujar, the owner of a small property dealer from Ghaziabad argues that for the business community, the manner in which rents are gathered also makes a difference. There were definitely high levels of corruption under the BSP regime, because everything was centralised and organised in a manner that ensured that funds flowed upwards, right to the top. However, within the SP, there are so many different factions and power centres. This was not the case with the BSP where there was a clear chain of command.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, a political scientist from Delhi who bought property in Ghaziabad observes that members of the urban middle class who bought property in Ghaziabad preferred the BSP state government over the SP. According to him, “the SP’s core constituency, the Yadavs and Muslims, are well-embedded within the power hierarchies of the urban area”.¹⁸⁵ They are, therefore, in a position to exert far greater pressure on the local bureaucracy and thereby gain control over the scarce resources of the state

The BSP worked to detach the process of real estate expansion from the local economy and place it in the hands of favoured corporate actors. Given the frenetic pace of urban change and rapid rise in property prices, the access to and control of land, as well the related super structures of permits and sanctions, are powerful means of rapid accumulation of wealth.¹⁸⁶ These are times of broad-based and almost dizzying socio-economic change. The rapid construction of the Yamuna Expressway by the Jay Prakash Consortium has resulted in land values rising at unprecedentedly rapid levels. Newspaper reports indicate the high levels of cooperation between the development authorities of NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Greater NOIDA and Agra (all controlled by the state government) and real estate consortia. According to Sam Chopra, the director of an Indian subsidiary of a North American real-estate brokerage, the Expressway is expected to attract \$25 billion (around Rs 1,20,000 crore) into projects along the NOIDA-Agra expressway.¹⁸⁷ In an interview, this prominent businessman informed the *Business Standard*:

What you are seeing today is only 5-6 per cent of the real estate development that is likely to happen (Kumar Das, 2010, 1)

¹⁸⁴ Interview, Hub Properties, Ghaziabad, 21st August, 2013

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Professor. SK Mishra, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, 13th September, 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Rohini Singh, “Deals worth 750 Crores involving Mayawati’s Brother under Scrutiny”. *The Economic Times*. 28th January 2013.

¹⁸⁷ Atanu Kumar Das, “Land Prices up 50 times in 10 years”. *Business Standard*. 13th September, 2010.

Whether these fantastic predictions will prove true is another matter. It is, however, a fact that twenty separate development consortia have announced projects along the Expressway. Jay Prakash associates alone has six residential projects along the Expressway. The maps below indicate the ambitious and expansive nature of the urban development plans that were conceived and implemented by the BSP state government between 2007 and 2012. Similarly, the BSP government also provided corporate conglomerates, such as the Ansals, with 2,400 of wetlands in Dadri in Greater NOIDA, and it also handed over prime real estate to the Wave development group in Ghaziabad.

5.4. Agra: From the Taj Corridor to Torrent Power: Pro-Corporate interventions in the local political economy

The struggle over control over real estate around the Taj Mahal indicates the extent to which development in Uttar Pradesh is a highly politicised process that is bound up with the ability to control the state. The Taj Corridor scheme would have established a clientelistic power framework between the city's business elite while also generating employment for the city's Jatav and Muslim populations. This project would have involved a tourist walkway surrounded by emporia and shopping centres connecting the historic Taj Mahal with the Agra Fort. This project was envisaged in 2002. However, it was successfully opposed by local commercial elites worked in conjunction to litigate against the project. Elite networks of bureaucrats and commercial elites successfully went to court to stall the project, whilst the local bureaucracy was successful in resisting attempts to clear the project quickly.

Shyam Aggarwal, a journalist and activist with close connections to the local bureaucracy, found violations of environmental norms, which were used to prevent the project from being implemented. Aggarwal had inside information within the local bureaucracy, and he used this privileged access to stay abreast of the plans to construct the Taj Corridor programme well in advance of the project's execution. Consequently, he was able to sue the state government and prevent the project from being completed.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, local bureaucratic elites used the relative weakness of the then BSP government, which did not command a legislative majority, to stall official clearance of construction.¹⁸⁹

The conditions governing economic exchange in India are very similar to what Alena Ledeneva observes in the context of post-Soviet Russia;

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Rajiv Yadav, Agra, 3rd December, 2012.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Pragati Chaturvedi, London, 5th October, 2012.

Anybody can be framed and found guilty of some violation of the formal rules because the economy operates in such a way that everyone is bound to be involved in some misdemeanor (Ledeneva, 2001, 13).

The project was successfully stalled, as there were genuine irregularities in the execution of the project. However, the established elite groups also sought to resist the top-down political change imposed by the BSP. They were undercut by the BSP's strategy of using state power to enlist corporate capital that undermined the local economy. R.P. Singh Yadav has a historical association with the rival Samajwadi Party, and is no supporter of the BSP. Yet, he feels the Taj Corridor was a missed opportunity:

I believe that Agra's development would have really taken off with the successful completion of this project. The walkways, the tourist emporia, shops would have generated considerable amounts of revenue for the city, and would have really gone a long way in creating an effective and upgraded tourist infrastructure for the city. However, the problem with UP is that politicians are too busy concerned with kickbacks to support projects for comprehensive development instead. They would rather stall the projects of their opponents than achieve something productive.¹⁹⁰

Consequently, a project such as the Taj Corridor, whatever the benefits for the overall development of the city, would have disadvantaged the traditional elites of the city. Their position would have been compromised by top-down arrangements between state-level political elites and closely-connected business folk not wholly associated with the traditional networks the city. R.P. Singh Yadav provides an insight into why local elite groups opposed such a project:

The real estate around the Taj Mahal is among the most lucrative in Agra. If you wish to get hold of a contract to run the parking lot there, you will have to pay up to 1 crore rupees. You can recover your investment very easily. The reason the local leaders opposed Mayawati was because, under her rule, the whole process was centralised in a manner that made it impossible for them to influence it. If the Taj Corridor had been built in this way, there would have been nothing left for these local fixers, their ability to control real estate through their networks in the Development Authority and the Municipal Corporation would have been ended for good.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Interview, Head Office *AAJ Newspaper*, Agra, 1st December 2012.

¹⁹¹ Interview, Head Office, *AAJ Newspaper*, Agra, 8th April, 2013.

Elite networks have still been relatively successful in preventing the subaltern challenge from wholly altering their power base. The reason for this is the legacy of long-standing associations as well as inherited advantage conferred by caste status and the monopoly over critical assets. The limited capacity of the state strengthens the power these informal networks that draw on local dominance in order to secure capital and perpetuate rule in local fields of power.

The BSP understood this and used the state-directed instrument of power to overturn local power relations. However, business is affected by the destructive nature of UP politics, which ensures that the projects of the previous government are cancelled as soon as a new party assumes power. The company that constructed the Yamuna Expressway from NOIDA to Agra was also awarded the contract for constructing a new Ring Road around Agra. This company received this very lucrative contract without any competition; it was the sole bidder. However, as soon as the SP came to power, the government cancelled this contract and decided to set up a new bidding processes thereby inviting possible bids from its own favoured contractors. The logic of power networks is dominated by personal interest, and the narrow group interest of the network. As Ledeneva observes about similar institutions in Russia:

The protection of one's narrow interests, or the interests of one's own network, almost always takes precedence over wider interests or the generic principles of economic rationality (Ledeneva, 1998, 40).

However, cancelling the agreement with the company chosen by the BSP and seeking to find a new bidder proved to be counterproductive. The state government could not find any firm willing to bid for this project worth Rs 10,000 crores.¹⁹² The reason for this failure could be that companies did not feel confident about investing large sums in a political economy of such great volatility, where electoral change could entail punitive action by rival politicians. The manner in which the tender was cancelled as soon as the state government changed hands indicates the extent to which the interests of business still rely on the entrenched power of government. This reflects the extent to which the Indian state is an informalised entity, and the extent to which commercial activity can be hindered by fluctuating political circumstances.

The BSP state government's decision to privatise the distribution of electricity was probably the most successful and significant pro-business intervention in the city. The state government's handover of

¹⁹² Interview with Rajiv Yadav, Agra Municipal Library, 21st October 2013

electricity distribution to a private company is a clear pro-business intervention. According to a union official and linesman:

After Independence, feudalism was ended by the state government. Now the BSP reinstituted *Zamindari* (feudalism) through the backdoor. The cost of power per unit show up greatly and the company, Torrent Power, became the new overlords causing great trouble to the ordinary citizens of Agra.¹⁹³

Along with the clash with organised labour in the power sector, there was also the transfer of extremely valuable public assets into the control of the private sector. Like its interventions in Ghaziabad, it attracted favourable attention from newspapers supportive of economic liberalisation. As an editorial in the *Indian Express* noted:

Agra is but the first town in a comprehensive attempt – initiated in November 2008 – to privatise UP electricity delivery, in order to cut down on theft and depoliticise the collection of user fees.¹⁹⁴

As the editorial observes, the theft of power from the public grid and the political negotiation involved in the process of collecting dues is commonplace. This is possible because of the operation of the porous bureaucracy. The linesmen from the electricity department, like other bureaucrats, are also political actors. They control access to the city's power supply and are able to use this access as leverage. Consequently, citizens and businessmen bribe linesmen and rely on the services of political brokers to illegally tap into the public grid. At one stroke, the BSP corporatised an extremely important section of the local economy. It completely eliminated the hold of political mediators operating in conjunction with employees of the state electricity corporation. Not everyone was happy with this policy. Kareem Sheikh's father had made a living from tapping into the power grid and providing power to their neighbourhood of Muslim auto-drivers and mechanics. According to Kareem:

The Torrent Power Company was very bad. It closed down the opportunity for poor people to tap into the system and take electricity at a cheap rate. My father is a leader for our colony. He worked with the local Samajwadi Party municipal councillor and the local

¹⁹³ Interview with Mukesh Sharma, Private Residence, 5th December 2013.

¹⁹⁴ Editorial. "Mayawati, Reformer". *The Indian Express*, April 2nd, 2010.

linesmen to tap into the system. That is no longer possible as Torrent made sure power would no longer be stolen. They also charge us much higher prices than before.¹⁹⁵

These are examples of a localised political economy disrupted by the BSP pro-business policies and centralising tendencies. Agra is an unusual city because Jatavs are unusually well-represented in the local economy. Consequently, the arrival of Torrent Power found resistance among some Jatavs as well. Dushyant Maurya is a wealthy leather exporter, who has diversified into property. He was also in charge of providing electricity to his neighbourhood of Nagla Teen. He was also critical of the BSP's electricity policy:

Mayawati did much good for our community. But Torrent Power was a very bad thing. We used to have an arrangement with the engineer and linesman at the local power sub-station. Whenever there was a power cut the phone calls would start. Our mobile would ring. We would organise everything together so that was a regular supply of electricity.

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However, his neighbour, Arjun Savedia, a school-teacher and social activist associated with the Dalit movement, has a very different perspective. His view actually chimes with those expressed in the editorial of the *Indian Express*. According to Mr Savedia:

The whole issue of *Netagiri* [politicking] over electricity supply ended with Torrent Power taking over. Earlier everything had to happen through a negotiation with the linesman. With Torrent the whole supply became regular and reliable.¹⁹⁷

The BSP also deployed engineers and linesmen to make sure that there was regular power supply provided to the Jatav neighbourhoods of the city.¹⁹⁸ This was extremely important for these communities, as the provision of regular and reliable power supply is extremely vital for the proper functioning of workshops and factories of the Jatav community. Moreover, power was provided to these areas at extremely subsidised rates. However, rates were then raised for wealthier households. According to a Jatav shoemaker, Ram Kumar, who was allotted an apartment in a purpose-built social housing complex, under the BSP government they had to pay bills of Rs 300 per quarter and were guaranteed round-the-clock power supply. However, once the BSP government fell from power, the Jatav homes and workshops lost this access to a regular, cheap power supply. Ram Kumar's electricity

¹⁹⁵ Interview, Kareem Sheikh, Private Home, Agra, 21st April, 2013.

¹⁹⁶ Interview, Dushyant Maurya, Private Home, Agra, 18th April, 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Agra, April 15th, 2013.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Manoj Savedia, Workshop, Agra, 10th May, 2013.

bill jumped from Rs 300 a quarter to over Rs 9,000, which was equivalent to his monthly earnings.¹⁹⁹ The leather industry, the small workshops and factories also suffered with the worsening power situation, electricity is an essential factor of production, as older artisanal modes of production are obsolete.²⁰⁰

5.5. The BSP state government and Dalit entrepreneurship

A particularly interesting and noteworthy facet of the BSP's pro-business policies is the manner in which the party related to the leather industry when in government. Agra is often referred to as the Dalit capital of North India, because of the historical association of the city with Dalits of the Jatav sub-caste. Like other Dalit sub-castes whose traditional caste-based occupation involves leather-work (Deshpande, 2007), the Jatavs have benefitted from the marketability of their artisanal skills in Agra's leather industry. This places them at a relative advantage compared to other Dalit sub-caste and facilitated their economic betterment (Lynch, 1969; Pai, 2001).

Employment in the leather industry, which directly employs over 200,000 residents, means that Jatavs are the largest single social group in Agra (Lynch, 1969). Agra is unusual both in terms of the presence of Dalits in the city as well as their levels of prosperity. Agra formed an important early mobilising point for the BSP because the Dalit movement in Agra had a material underpinning. According to Ram Kumar, the Dalit activist from Lucknow:

The Jatav merchants of Agra were involved in manufacturing finished leather products from very early on. This is in stark contrast to other centres of leather manufacturing such as Kanpur, where the Jatavs worked as producers of raw leather hides, and where Muslim merchants from the Qureshi caste have dominated the whole manufacturing process. This has given Jatavs a commercial advantage that is unique in all of Uttar Pradesh, if not in India. It is this commercial association between Jatavs and the leather industry that has given Agra the title of the Dalit capital of India.²⁰¹

The leather industry has provided the BSP with something unique in Agra, a network and community of Jatav patrons. There is a major reason why the Jatavs of Agra describe this city as their capital. This is a city where Jatavs possess capital and, as a result, are able to provide patronage to poorer members of their communities and to other communities. This has enabled the Jatav elite of Agra to

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Ram Kumar Jatav, Kanshi Ram Colony, Agra, April 11th, 2013.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Manoj Savedia, Workshop, Agra, 10th May, 2013.

²⁰¹ Interview, Vidhan Sabha Sadan, Lucknow, January 5th 2013.

emerge as major patrons in the city, as senior exporters and hotel owners.²⁰² They are able to use their wealth and independent resources to provide the material resources and governmental access vital for patronage, even when the BSP is no longer in power. The Jatavs provide patronage to poorer Jatav clients but also to clients from communities which are too poor to access their own patrons. This allowed them to become hoteliers and set up export businesses, as they developed the relevant contacts in the local bureaucracy that removed the serious hurdles associated with setting up these businesses.²⁰³

When in power, the BSP also worked hard to remove barriers faced by small-scale producers in the leather industry by removing all taxes on the leather on cheap shoes, which provided small traders relief from excessive taxation and rent-seeking by agents of the state. The state government also used resources from the Agra Development Authority, to help large local leather exporters to develop a brand new “Leather Park” and shoe distribution centre away from the traditional elite-controlled markets. The BSP made a concerted effort to establish separate distribution networks that would expand the existing Jatav networks. Had the party succeeded, it would replace the historical distribution centre in the heart of Agra’s *Hing Ki Mandi* market.²⁰⁴ This market is wholly controlled by Bania distribution networks, which have far greater access to credit and outside buyers than the Jatav community. Its efforts were thwarted by the fact that, by the time the shoe distribution centre established by the Agra Development Authority (ADA) was set and up and ready for business, the BSP government fell from power. Nonetheless, the party succeeded in helping the Jatav community access crucial resources that stimulated the leather industry.

Another even more expansive project involved the creation of an Integrated Leather Park. This project, begun in 2008, involved the acquisition of 111 hectares of land on the edge of Agra. The Leather Park was aimed creating a centralised hub for the production of small- and medium-sized production units benefitting from economies of scale and specialised infrastructure and training. The state government delegated the UP State Industrial Development Corporation (UPSIDC) to construct the entire Park. Moreover, it emphasised the role of the Leather Park in upgrading the skills of Agra’s artisans. As the *Business Standard* reports:

...The Footwear Design and Development Institute Noida has decided to set up a branch of the institute in Agra, which will train at least 12,000 single-skilled operators for the

²⁰² Interview with Arjun Savedia and Rajiv Yadav, Costa Coffee, Agra, 23rd September, 2013.

²⁰³ Interview with Manish Bhaiyyo, leather workshop, Agra, April 11th 2013.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Dushyant Maurya, Family Home, Agra, 13th August, 2013.

industry within the next three years to combat the shortage of skilled labour in the sector (Sharma, 2008, 1).

However, once the BSP state government lost the state elections, the entire project was abandoned by the successor state government. The Leather Park complex lies, deserted, at the edge of Agra, having met the same fate as the Agra Ring Road.²⁰⁵ Once again the politics of providing tenders to favoured bidders takes precedence over recovering the sunk costs involved in ambitious, long-term projects.

The pro-business policies of the BSP have gone a long way in consolidating the position of Jatavs within the political hierarchy of the city. According to a local academic, Jatavs were increasingly moving up the occupational ladder in the leather industry:

In the newly constructed shoe market here, 80 percent of the shops are owned by Dalits. We also see a steady improvement in the living standards, with more Dalit children going to schools, learning English. (Syed Jafri, cited in Khandelwal, 2011: 1).

This is especially true for Agra. The leather industry has historically provided the essential material basis for Dalit political assertion in Agra. In contemporary Agra, the BSP's assumption of political power has created another, lucrative material basis for Jatav political assertion. This centres on the market for real estate expansion. The revenues generated from corporate economic expansion and real estate development has helped consolidated and expand the Jatav political elite in the city. These have, in turn, transferred crucial resources to poorer members of their own community. Real estate expansion has provided resources for business patrons, who in turn have provided benefits to Jatav contractors and sub-contractors. Agra has not experienced an economic boom on the same scale as in Ghaziabad, but the Jatav community is much better-placed in the city's power networks. This is because the well-entrenched Jatav power brokers associated with the local MLAs have been able to extend patronage to poorer Jatavs as well as to swing voters/clients from poorer communities.

In 2013, even after the BSP government had been ousted from power, the Agra Development Authority still provided funds for this scheme. There was a sufficiently empowered Jatav political machine at the urban level to raise funds through local businesses and elites. This particular Dalit machine is of recent vintage and a central figure is Ajay Shil Gautam, a former Minister in the state government. Gautam co-ordinated the Bhimnagari programme in his neighbourhood in 2013. What is particularly irksome for upper-caste and wealthy landed groups is Gautam's success in establishing his own

²⁰⁵ Interview, Rajiv Yadav, Café Coffee Day, Agra, 22nd November, 2012.

political networks within the bureaucracy.²⁰⁶ These reciprocal arrangements have enabled him to emerge as an important real-estate developer locally.²⁰⁷ His construction of the Buddhist temple and ability to secure funds from the Development Authority are the most overt indications of his access to state resources. Gautam has also facilitated the construction of new housing developments and luxury flats on the edges of Sewla Jat, thereby consolidating his position as political patron and property developer. This is one example of the manner in which the BSP sought to use the corporate economy to shift power away from the local economy dominated by historical elites. Gautam used his contacts with the state government to bring about major transformation in the political economy of the local area. Gautam provided loans and permits that enabled Jatavs to set up businesses alongside the major causeway that cuts across this neighbourhood. He used his contacts with the local Development Authority to facilitate the construction of an elite residential complex called Silver Town.²⁰⁸ The funds generated from this real estate expansion then helped pay for improvements to the Jatav neighbourhoods around the neighbourhood. Gautam's power base is located in the peri-urban neighbourhood of Sewla Jat.

Similarly, at the level of the Agra Municipality, an engineer from the centrally-funded Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) is a senior pro-BSP bureaucrat. His competence and his ability to ensure that infrastructure projects were executed on time ensured his success even after the change in government. He remained in his position because the local business community was successful in lobbying for his retention as Chief Engineer.²⁰⁹ This gentleman is part of the city's Jatav elite, and his skill and reputation makes him a crucial co-ordinator of the public-private partnership undertaken by the state government. Consequently, despite significant setbacks, the BSP's pro-business policies helped entrench the Jatavs in positions of considerable prominence within the city's political economy. These advancements survived the state government and continue to provide the Jatav community with much needed patronage and access to the state government under an otherwise apathetic state administration.

5.6. Conclusion: urban expansion, commercial elites and the state

The BSP carried a number of significant pro-business interventions in the local political economies of Agra and Ghaziabad. The state interventions carried out by the BSP have enabled it to create and expand its own power and patronage networks. The economic growth generated by these

²⁰⁶ Interview with Mr Pant, Private Residence, Agra, 11th April, 2013.

²⁰⁷ Interview Arjun Savedia, Buddhist Temple, Sewla, Agra, 3rd December 2012.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Interview, Rajiv Singh Yadav, August 20th, 2013.

pro-business policies were also used to transfer resources to favoured constituencies. In Ghaziabad, the BSP was able to create an electoral alliance that was heterogeneous. This was because pro-business policies, implemented by contractors from the local commercial elite and landed, dominant castes provided the resources and jobs for the party's core, the Dalits, as well as the city's more affluent communities at the same time. Consequently, the antagonism caused by competition over scarce resources and access to the state was reduced because of the expanded resource base provided by economic expansion. Similarly, in Agra, the state government interventions in the real estate and leather industries served to provide resources and access that enabled the Jatav community to advance in the local political economy.

The BSP coordinated commercial activity through a powerful, centralised bureaucratic structure. This enabled tight control by the party leadership as well as the speedy implementation of the state government's pro-business policies. This also served to erode the power of the informal economy of traditional elites and replace it with favoured contractors allied to the BSP. Dalits had to rely on the BSP's promotion of a statist, pro-business polity to make economic progress. Despite major reversals, the BSP government's interventions have also resulted in lasting progress for its allies who were able to entrench themselves through active involvement in the real-estate industry. It appears that the promotion of corporate economy and the state-abetted inflow of capital from non-local sources helped consolidate the position of the marginalised Dalit community within the local political economy.

6. The BSP and the Politics of Urban Policing in Western Uttar Pradesh

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the manner in which the BSP state government sought to reform and direct the Uttar Pradesh police force. The BSP statist ideology and Bonarpartist regime shaped the manner in which the state administration was controlled by political elites. This had significant impact on the structure of the police force, as well as on the manner in which the bureaucratic chain of command was enforced. Local political leaders lost power over the selection of police officers and administrators, who were appointed by Chief Ministerial aides in the state capital, Lucknow.²¹⁰ The BSP used the police force to alter the balance of power between social groups in urban Agra and Ghaziabad. The centralisation of the police force benefitted Dalits, poorer Muslims and upper-caste groups whose social status was undermined by rent-seeking arrangements governed by the politically ascendant communities associated with the Samajwadi Party.²¹¹

The empirical data presented in this chapter indicates the extent to which the centralised bureaucratic chain of command altered urban policing strategies. In both Agra and Ghaziabad, the BSP administration was marked by the transfer of power to senior police officers from the Indian Police Service (IPS).²¹² Prior to the election of a BSP government, localised patron-client relationships controlled by politicians shaped the appointment and actions of the local police force.²¹³ Such informal networks of political strongmen connected with the Samajwadi Party, suppressed during the BSP's regime, have been revived under the Akhilesh Yadav administration.²¹⁴ Consequently, this chapter argues that the BSP's approach to policing reflected the interests of the social constituencies that were central to the governing coalition which ruled Uttar Pradesh between 2007 and 2013. Improved law and order counts the most significant and tangible achievement of the BSP government.

6.2. The BSP's state administrative reforms of Policing: 2007-2012

Among the first measures taken by the incoming BSP regime was a massive overhaul of the system of police recruitment. This involved overturning the selection of over 18,000 police personnel. The BSP government also initiated disciplinary proceedings against senior members of the elite cadre of officers from the IAS and IPS and extremely senior ministers from the Samajwadi Party

²¹⁰ Interview with Saagar Tiwari, Lucknow, September 18th, 2013.

²¹¹ Interview with Bhagwan Das Sharma, Sultanpura, Agra, 15th May, 2013.

²¹² Interview with Mohan Kumar, Ghaziabad, 1st September, 2013.

²¹³ Interview with Mohan Singh Lodh, Agra, 16th April, 2013.

²¹⁴ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 18th September, 2013.

government. The BSP then installed its own system of police recruitment that recruited 35,000 individuals into the state police force. A right-wing newspaper, the *Pioneer*, reported with approval:

The Uttar Pradesh Government has taken an extraordinary step towards police reforms...Ms Mayawati... has instructed her administration to scan the answer-sheets of 2,28,000 candidates who recently sat for a selection examination for 35,000 posts of constables and make them available online. Each applicant will have the right to access his or her answer-sheet, tally it with the listed right answers, and if he or she has been unfairly marked, file an appeal....But since it was an objective test based on multiple choice answers and the examiners had no discretionary powers to either mark up or mark down the applicants based on their 'subjective' assessment of his or her abilities, it's unlikely those who contest the results will get too far in using loopholes in the law to either hold up the recruitment process or force the Government to employ those unworthy of the job. In the past, the recruitment of constables for Uttar Pradesh Police has always been a controversial affair. Instead of selecting candidates based on their merit and potential policing acumen, the emphasis has been on caste, community and, the most important of all, cash. Hopefuls readily paid huge sums of money to get into the State police force, and then subsequently recovered their 'investment' and more through means that do not merit elaboration. The money would travel all the way up to those in power. The last time constables were recruited in large numbers for Uttar Pradesh Police was when Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav was in power, and it was a scandal. Ms Mayawati has put an end to that abominable practice, hopefully for good. (Gupta, 2011, 1)

Further administrative reforms which the Mayawati administration introduced in the UP state police involved the transfer of greater power to the police force itself. It was the BSP which introduced the Commissioner system in 2007. This resulted in a dramatic shake-up of the state police. The most crucial aspect of these reforms involved creating the post of a Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) who reported directly to the state police chief. Moreover, the new system ensured that all police stations would be headed by police officers with the rank of Inspector. This meant that the Inspectors in charge of police stations were no longer under the purview of local politicians. Instead, they were directly appointed by the state police chief (the Director-General of Police) in Lucknow.

These reforms were met with serious resistance from the bureaucrats from the state administrative service. Officers from the Indian Administrative Service resisted the implementation of these reforms,

as it curtailed their powers and transferred powers from themselves to the Indian Police Service and the Provincial Police Service. As Pervez Iqbal Siddiqui observed in 2007:

Aspects like issue of warrants, slapping provisions of different Acts (like goonda, gangster and national security), issuing of licences, permission for police *lathi* charge [riot control through batons and teargas] and other preventive actions presently require the sanction of the District Magistrate. In a police commissioner system, the authority for all these actions rests with the men-in-uniform alone. (Siddiqui, 2007, 1).

These reforms have not been impaired by the subsequent Samajwadi Party government, which has worked to implement the Commissioner system established by its predecessor.

Nonetheless, there have been significant reversals in other areas of policing with significant implications for law and order in the state. While the BSP ensured a riot-free state, the Samajwadi Party has failed to prevent religious violence and anti-Muslims pogroms under its watch. Varghese K George of the *Hindustan Times* observed that the SP administration was undermined by the decentralised statecraft practiced by the Samajwadi Party. The journalist argued, in line with the main argument of this chapter, that the SP's statecraft reflects one of "multiple power centres" (George, 2013, 1). The state's Chief Minister, Akhilesh Yadav, granted party leaders the power to appoint police chiefs and Station House Officers at their own discretion. Consequently, these SP politicians were able to select bureaucrats who were personally loyal to themselves. This resulted in the deliberate undermining of the Weberian concept of line management or professionalisation. As a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer observed:

[Out] of the 1,500-odd police stations in the state, at least 800 are headed by people recommended by local SP leaders. Practically, they are not under the control of the district superintendents of police, who in many cases are themselves appointed by SP leaders (George, 2013, 1).

Dushyant Nagar, a political leader from Ghaziabad explains:

NOIDA and Ghaziabad are primary centres of business and commerce in the whole state of Uttar Pradesh. The two cities generate the highest revenues for the state government. Both parties use the police force to protect the gains they can make from obtaining political power. In Mayawati's time, the police were used to protect the large corporate houses engaged in massive road-building and real-estate investments in the region. We sought to blockade these projects on behalf of farmers, so that farmers got higher and

more adequate compensation for losing their ancestral land. Under the BSP this was impossible, as the police had every power to arrest you for so much as coming near such high-value projects. Our connections with police officers did not matter anymore because their seniors were appointed from Lucknow and held all power over decision-making. Consequently, all these projects favouring big business went through while the state police brutally surprising anyone who challenged or even questioned these projects. Under the Samajwadi Party, there are corrupt officers and there are good officers. We are able to stall building projects and real-estate development again because we can use our connections with friendly and co-operative police officers. The BSP government did not care about the interests of farmers, as Dalits don't own land, and instead favoured big business. The SP government is friendlier to the interests of farmers. However, the administrative hierarchy breaks down during the SP government and there is considerable paralysis, and governance falters. Everything works only according to personal connections. The police officers at the central police stations in NOIDA, and Ghaziabad, proximate to the largest corporate investments are directly appointed by government ministers and politicians. They report only to their political bosses and have no interest in respecting the administrative hierarchy. In this way even relatively junior officers gain real power through political connections while their technical superiors are powerless.²¹⁵

This is in stark contrast to the statecraft implemented by the BSP Chief Minister, Mayawati. According to the same correspondent of the *Hindustan Times*, the BSP placed all powers of bureaucratic appointment and deployment in the hands of her handpicked Cabinet Secretary, Shashank Shekhar Singh.

The Cabinet Secretary was the BSP Chief Minister's "single point of contact between her and the state machinery" (George, 2013, 1). As a result, the Chief Minister divested herself of the burden of micro-management and the appointment of individual Police Commissioners. Instead, these appointment decisions were implemented by the Cabinet Secretary and the Uttar Pradesh State Police Chief. These senior-most officials "were free to replace officials as long as they remained within the CM's broad guidelines" (Ibid.). Consequently, this led to improved relations with the police, better policing, law and order, all of which seem good reasons to appreciate the role of the BSP.

²¹⁵ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad, 17th September, 2013.

6.3. The Social implication of the BSP's police reforms for Dalit-Bahujans

Urbanisation has brought about the greater contestation of social dominance. Contestation and status anxiety means that traditional elites are often eager to reinforce their threatened dominance with the force of violence if necessary. Strongmen are usually from landed communities as they possess the necessary ability to rally followers, the ability to summon troops in order to inflict violence on those who challenge their dominance. This can only happen if they have the blessing of local agents of the state. Arjun Chauhan, a Rajput from peri-urban Agra, provides an account as to the manner in which local landed elites were able to use their personal ties with the state. This worked to deliberately incapacitate the formal state:

My village lies on the main causeway linking Agra with the Rajasthan border. Now on the causeway of our village, there was a Luhaar [a low-caste ironsmith], who would ply his trade. He once insulted me. He spoke very rudely to me. So I beat him up so badly that he had to be hospitalised. I knew I was in trouble. So I went to the local police inspector, Mr Rahul Sharma. This man was a very good man. His police jeep received petrol from my boss. He enjoyed an unlimited supply of petrol from my boss. He was in debt to my boss, and we enjoyed good relations. The Inspector heard about how I had to teach the Luhaar a lesson and he told me that my crime was quite serious in the eyes of the law. So he told me lie low for a week. I spent the whole week at home, as if I was under house arrest. After that I was free, and I had also taught the Luhaar a lesson about dishonouring a Rajput.²¹⁶

Half a decade later, Mr Chauhan's younger brother had a very different experience of the local state, now that it was headed by a Dalit Chief Minister. When the younger Mr Chauhan assaulted a Jatav laborer, he came to realise that the days of impunity were over:

My brother was picked up by the police for violating the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. Just because he beat a Chamaar [pejorative name for Jatav], he was not given any bail. They held him without bail for a fortnight. I had to pay them a bribe of 15,000 rupees just to get bail. Then I had to pay the local judge another 30,000 rupees so that he would not be convicted. You just could not touch these people because it was their government. They would gather together, form a mob, and march to the police station.

²¹⁶ Interview with Arjun Chauhan, Tourist Taxi Drivers' Union Office, Agra.

Just like Ambedkar points his finger in his statues, these people would point fingers, and you just could no longer touch them.²¹⁷

Under the BSP, the bureaucracy and the police remain superordinate to political actors. The BSP kept its urban political leaders at arm's length from an empowered bureaucracy. Bureaucrats were appointed using the state civil servants' chain of command. Appointments were made vertically, and the bureaucracy was disembedded from local patron-client networks. Under the SP's regime, the bureaucracy is completely embedded and enmeshed within local power networks.

The BSP exerted better top-down control over its cadre. Moreover, when MLAs carry out flagrant violations of the law (there was no shortage of violence and criminality among BSP politicians), they were taken to task by an empowered bureaucracy working under direct orders of the BSP chief. As Satish Awaana observed:

When MLAs from the BSP misbehave, they are brought to book. When Rajas and landlords are arrested for going against the regime, then what chance does the ordinary citizen have? When Mahendra Singh Tikait insulted Mayawati, she sent 10,000 police officers to arrest him. This sends a very clear message that power is in the hands of the Chief Minister and nobody can go against her wishes. Her power was maintained by the enforcement of a very strict administration. This was the way that everyone who could challenge her would be brought to account by an administration that was more powerful than any politicians or MLA from the party.²¹⁸

At the same time, there was pressure on the police to ease their rent-seeking from the urban poor. This was the common refrain from auto-drivers and hawkers who worked on the street. The routines of law enforcement were altered by a strong centralised administration which then altered the balance of power towards poorer social groups.

The power of landed communities derives from their ability to make urban transitions through political connection with the bureaucracy. As farming loses its cash-making ability, landed groups use politics as a means to make urban transitions. By centralising the administration, the BSP could close off these channels, and thereby weaken the power of landed groups in favour of Dalits. This harks back to an old Ambedkarite ideological tenet that the centralised state is better at providing security and emancipation for Dalits, as opposed to a localised state which is hand-in-glove with local

²¹⁷ Interview with Arjun Chauhan, Tourist Taxi Drivers' Union Office, Agra.

²¹⁸ Interview with Shyam Kumar Jatav, Private residence, Agra 1st June.

dominant castes. Consequently, this changed the relations of power to such an extent that, in the perception of a Jatav shop-keeper:

This was our government. So we could walk with our heads held high. The suppliers and contractors from the Bania, Jat and Yadav communities could no longer short-change us because we knew that the government was on our side. This meant we could bring them to task for late payments or overcharging. They could no longer bribe the police to harass us if we caused them trouble.²¹⁹

Manish, a shoe-maker, explained how the BSP brought considerable changes to Agra:

The District Magistrate is the king of the district. He has all the power in terms of making sure work gets done, and developmental funds are allocated. Yet, even he has to come to his desk by 10 AM under Mayawati's government. He could not act above the law. The Constitution was supreme.²²⁰

A Dalit police officer from Agra explains:

Under Mayawati, things were better for us bureaucrats. We had to work a lot harder but Dalit bureaucrats do not have access to wealthy landed groups or to merchants in the same way as others do. We come from a relatively poor community. So, for us to progress in our careers, we have to prove our competence. This is especially because we are seen as having benefitted only from reservations rather than from our own personal competence. So appointments and promotions have to be done achieved through government procedure. This also makes sense because our community, even our middle class, does not have the sort of money to pay bribes. When the bureaucracy functions properly, only then can the SC bureaucracy prove its worth and also do something for the community.²²¹

The power of strongmen politicians in Uttar Pradesh goes against the stated aims of the Bahujan Samaj Party, and their wholesale accommodation into the party worked towards alienating the core constituency of the party. As Ram Kumar, a prominent activist from Lucknow observes:

We were waiting to meet the Chief Minister, Ms. Mayawati. Before that, we met a senior Chief Secretary, who gave us a list of non-Dalit politicians. He said to us: 'I can't say anything but you must, slap these people. They have been stealing from our people but

²¹⁹ Interview with Pramod Pippal, Shoe Factory, Agra, 1st May, 2013.

²²⁰ Interview with Manish Bhaironath, Private Residence, Agra, 8th May, 2013.

²²¹ Interview with Shailendra Chauhan, Mehtab Bag, Agra, 11th April, 2013.

still they are in the party'. Loyal bureaucrats were getting angry at these strongmen politicians whose actions are very much against the Dalit mission.²²²

Accordingly, the core constituency of the BSP views the Dalit bureaucracy with greater respect than the professional politicians whom they elect on the basis of party loyalty. The same is true for poorer Muslims:

Of course, Jatavs benefitted the most from the BSP. Mayawati's people got government jobs. But her people are poor. So they will not want to fight with us. Mayawati did not go against poor people. She did not hurt poor people. Poor people require the system to work fairly because they do not have connections or money to buy their way out of the system. When the system worked fairly, poor people do not have to fall at the feet of local politicians. When the police caught you in Mayawati's time, they would issue a sentence the very next day. They did not have the power to place false charges against you.²²³

The Jatav community knew that they could go straight to the police station to get their claims registered. Rather than seeing the state as an alien or hostile entity, they felt a sense of ownership of the state. This had a dramatic relational change in the manner in which the state was perceived. As an elderly Jatav gentleman observes:

Whatever you say about whether the government has delivered or not, whether the BSP has done enough or not, you could say with absolute certainty that this was our government. We could walk with our heads held up high and without any fear of being threatened by the Jats.²²⁴

A gathering of six young men explain how local social relations changed dramatically following regime change in Lucknow. According to Guddu, the son of a prosperous leather factory owner, relations between Jatavs and dominant landed groups changed dramatically after the BSP came to power:

Things were very tough for us earlier as they would not lose any opportunity to put us down. If our goats or sheep grazed on their land, they would kill them straightaway. If we annoyed Jats in anyway, they would parade people naked in public. This happened even ten years ago. But then in 2007, everything changed because the BSP came to power,

²²² Interview with Ram Kumar, Vidhan Sabha Sadan, Lucknow, 6th January, 2013.

²²³ Interview with Hamid Sheikh, Private house, Agra, 14th September 2013.

²²⁴ Interview with Babulal, Private Residence, Agra, 4th April, 2013.

because now the police began registering cases against violence, and they had to...Earlier they would not do anything, but now they would be suspended for 6 months, or even sacked if they did not act.²²⁵

The changed social status for the Jatav community had other practical advantages. They routinely spoke about how, now that the BSP had come to power, it was “their government” (“*Hamari Sarkar hai*”). The Jatav community now had privileged access to the state, obtaining licenses, ration cards, identity documents with much greater ease than before. This was aided by the BSP government’s policy of posting sympathetic bureaucrats in key positions, which would ensure state resources were diverted towards Jatav neighbourhoods. The Jatavs remained poorer than the landed Jats, but they were now better connected to the state machinery.

Under the BSP, the changed relationship between the police and the marginalised affected the lives of non-Jatavs too. The difference was that the Jatav community in Western UP was no longer subservient, and was able to resist threats of violence. Dharmender Gautam from a village just outside Agra illustrates the manner in which the BSP regime has ensured protection even after it fell from power:

Just after Mayawati was voted out, the Jats in our village decided that we needed to be taught a lesson for walking with our heads held high for the past five years. They gathered together and decided to beat us up. We huddled together in our houses waiting for the worst. But then a good man from their community was able to dissuade his people from attacking us. He told his fellow Jats, ‘Listen, if Mayawati comes back to power next time around, the Jatavs will remember the beating, and then they will make our lives hell.’²²⁶

However, the situation is much more precarious for poorer Dalit community, the Balmiki. Vikram and Ratan Balmiki are both self-confessed *goondas* from Agra. They are also extremely hostile to the BSP, which they see as a party only for the Jatavs, which is wholly indifferent to the Balmikis. At the same time, they are unhesitating in their praise for the law and order of the BSP days. As Ratan Kumar Balmiki explains:

Mayawati only helped her own people get government jobs, and spent all the money on helping the Jatavs. But our community is like the *Bathua* weed that flourishes when the wheat crop is watered by the farmer. The SC/ST Act provided us with protection and

²²⁵ Interview with Mahesh, Shiva Temple, Agra, 4th April, 2013.

²²⁶ Interview with Ravi Gautam, Shoe workshop, Agra, 13th April 2013.

dignity too. Nowadays, our community is just safe. I was part of my cousin's *Baraat*, and the local Thakurs were very angry that we had chosen to place the groom on a white horse. They say this as an insult, and they attacked our *Baraat* and pulled the groom down from his horse, and beat him severely.²²⁷

A similar incident was recorded in the *Dainik Jagaran* in November. The anguished relatives of the Balmiki groom pointed out that despite the fact that the city now had a Balmiki mayor, he was unable to protect the community, and the police took no action against the perpetrators of violence, who felt incensed that the Balmiki ride on horses for their *Baraats*. Mahesh Gautam, a Dalit auto-driver from Ghaziabad explains that relations between the police and the urban poor are never amicable. The police have compulsions taking bribes and would seek to extract bribes from auto-drivers during any political regime. However, according to Mr Gautam, bribes were taken in secret under the previous government:

If the police were caught taking bribes, without a doubt they would be suspended.... Nowadays, the local politician is charge of the circle officer. There is open corruption. Police constables stand together by the roadside and they set targets and then divide up the money made from taking bribes from auto-drivers, truck-drivers, rickshaw pullers and other poor helpless people.²²⁸

Mr Gautam's account is corroborated by Rajat Singh, a Rajput civil servant from Ghaziabad. According to this Income Tax Officer:

What this man [Mahesh Gautam] says is probably correct. Under the Samajwadi Party, the local police officers, at the level of the Station House Officer (SHO) rely on patronage from local Samajwadi political leaders. They are then able to collect bribes and extort money from small businessmen, auto-drivers and all other road transport users with impunity. The Senior Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate have much less power under the Samajwadi Party, as they are transferred frequently. The police officers are insulated through their ties to local politicians, and they have the real control over urban policing. The senior IAS officers are transferred frequently, and their subordinate Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Assistant Superintendents are scared of crossing well-connected politicians and their allies in the police force. So extortion and rent-seeking

²²⁷ Interview with Ratan Kumar Balmiki, Agra, 25th September 2013.

²²⁸ Interview with Amit Gautam, Auto rickshaw, Ghaziabad, 18th September, 2013.

rackets continue unabated and unhindered. The formal hierarchy counts for less. When the BSP comes to power, no political leader, not even the party's own legislators can go against the writ of the Chief Minister's aides in Lucknow, and this strengthens the power of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. The local Station House Officers, who are the most steeped in corruption through their personal connections, lose the patronage and protection of political leaders. They are no longer able to extort. The state administration is better organised under the BSP in this way.²²⁹

Shyam Kumar Kushwaha explains how the situation has changed for the worse:

Now, if I go to the police station, they will ask my caste. I will answer, Kushwaha. So they will make me stand and wait for two hours. But if a Yadav comes to the station, the Station Officer will offer him a chair, and see him before me, even if he has come two hours after me. And once he says he is a Yadav, the police will take his side, regardless of whether he has committed a crime or not.²³⁰

Political and social dominance in urban and rural areas is determined by "*Pahunch*" or access. A cycle-rickshaw driver in Ghaziabad and an auto rickshaw driver in Agra both had a sharp understanding of the lack of agency and social power available to the poor.²³¹ They both echoed very similar sentiments, which Kalu Ram, a *Sapera* (snake-charmer) by caste and a Ghaziabad cycle-rickshaw driver by profession, articulated more eloquently:

We are poor people and up to where can our access go? So now, when the police and the authorities are misbehaving, there is nothing we do, we just have to bear it. Our voices are not heard any higher up. Under Mayawati, there was fear, so the officials had to pay attention. This meant the police would report out complaints. This meant there was *Sunwai* [audience] from the authorities and *insaaf* [justice] even for the gareeb aadmi [poor man].²³²

Arjun Savedia, a Jatav school-teacher, explained the extent to which even middle-class Jatavs were feeling pressure from a changed law and order situation:

My nephew's SIM card was apparently chiming with that of a criminal accused of kidnapping. They did not catch the criminal but they caught my nephew. They held him

²²⁹ Interview with Rajat Singh, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, 25th September, 2013.

²³⁰ Interview with Shyam Kushwaha, Teashop, Agra, 15th May, 2013.

²³¹ Interview with Arman Ali, Agra, 17th September, 2013.

²³² Interview with Kalu Ram Sapera, Cycle Rickshaw, Ghaziabad, 2nd September, 2013.

in jail for three days. It took a lot of persuasion for us to even get food to him. The only reason we could is because there were two Jatav policemen there at the station. The Jatav police were only there because the BSP government had made it a government law that every station had to have two Dalits and one female police officer at every station and police post. We finally got him released after paying Rs 5,000. He was completely innocent. They had falsely accused him. They had also arrested 32 other people before my nephew. Can you imagine how much money they would have made from each of them?²³³

Arjun Savedia had many criticisms of the Mayawati regime. He argued that the BSP was an authoritarian party, that it did not encourage dissent, and that its powerful structure had compromised the movement for Dalit emancipation. However, he argued that the state administration worked for the ordinary public in terms of the basic functions of the state. According to him, under Mayawati:

The fast-track courts worked so that people would not lose money in legal cases that never ended. Instead, these courts provided speedy redress to the problems of the people.²³⁴

As Rupa Singh, a female Jatav school teacher, explains:

In the BSP government, we could come home late at night without any fear. There were police everywhere, and there were constant patrols. Now there is no police anywhere, we must come home by seven in the evening because you barely see the police.²³⁵

For instance, Mohan Singh Lodha, a ward councilor from the BJP observed:

I find that both governments are caste-obsessed and do not care for the nation as a whole. However, I can say this, that under the Samajwadi Party, all Yadavs become *Bahubali* [strongmen] and are given the power to cause trouble and trouble people. They extort money from poor, from shopkeepers and ordinary people. The Police do nothing to stop them. The BSP government is better than the Samajwadi Party because the administration is very strict and law and order is enforced properly.²³⁶

²³³ Interview with Arjun Savedia, Private Residence, Agra, April 28th, 2013.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Interview with Rupa Singh, Private Residence, Agra, April 30th, 2013.

²³⁶ Interview with Mohan Singh Lodha, April 20th 2013. Private Residence, Agra.

6.4. Urban Policing and the Muslim Poor under the BSP, 2007-2012

The brutality of the UP police that particularly targets Muslims seems to make them hark back with nostalgia for the “days of Mayawati”. The improved relationship with the state seems to have left a particularly deep impression on the Muslim community, which is probably the most alienated from the Indian state in the post-Independence period. The relationship between the urban poor Muslim and the police is particularly tense, as there are very few Muslims in the police. Mohsin Ali, a native of Agra, runs a small Mausambi juice stand along the main causeway in the city. The Samajwadi Party has permitted this to remain after assuming power in 2012. When the BSP was in power, the Dalit community did not have the same ability to exert violence and dominance as the Yadavs. Hamid Sheikh explains why:

Mayawati’s people [Dalits] are third-class people. Even when the BSP comes to power, they will not bully you in the way Yadavs do when the SP is in power. This is because they still rely on Muslims and Banias for work. They work with us in the auto-rickshaw trade and in the leather industry. So they don’t like to fight with us. Or they clean our streets and our homes, so if they fight with us their income will suffer. Yadavs are all politicians, and contractors. When their party is in power, they speak to anyone however they want and everyone has to bow before them.²³⁷

Salman Sheikh, a Muslim auto-driver and self-confessed petty criminal, recalls an incident under the BSP government:

The police had picked us up because they caught me and some Jatav boys doing something wrong. They dragged us off to the police station and slapped me. That was humiliating but I bore it. And they threatened us. I called Moinuddin, a Muslim BSP politician, and they called their Jatav politician. Because they had caught us doing this crime [Mr Sheikh was coy about specifying the exact nature of this crime] we had to pay them off. The police are always criminal and crooked. Still, because it was a BSP government and because the two others with me were Jatav, they would not beat us, and they let us go the same night.²³⁸

Arman Khan, voted for the Samajwadi Party in 2012. Yet, within a year he had begun to regret his decision because he felt the behaviour of the police had taken a serious turn for the worse:

²³⁷ Interview with Hamid Sheikh, Agra, 6th May, 2013.

²³⁸ Interview with Hamid Sheikh, Agra, 14th May, 2013.

Once during Mayawati's rule, I had committed a traffic violation and the police grabbed hold of me. I said to them, 'Sir, let me off, I will pay you 100 rupees'. The police officer, shouted at me, 'How dare you try to bribe me?' And he was very scared, so he went away, and sent his constable to collect the bribe, all the time being wary and secretive.... Under the Samajwadi Party, even policeman becomes a Neta, and every Yadav can do what he wants. There is no sense of state administration, and absolute impunity. Under Mayawati, the police had to behave themselves. Because if their superiors found out that they were acting badly, they would get suspended. And the suspension would not last for less than 6 months. This made the police very scared. Now under the SP, the police freely demand bribes of up to 500 rupees, even when you have not done anything wrong.²³⁹

Mauveen is an auto mechanic. His friend was playing cards by the roadside and the police picked him up for gambling. They wanted 10,000 rupees from him. When he refused to pay they slapped another charge on him that was much more serious and was non-bailable. Mauveen stepped in and cashed his Life Insurance policy worth Rs 1 lakh as a bond so that his friend could get bail – all of this happened on Bakri-Id. The irony is that all the men involved in this case had voted for the SP. They all said that in Mayawati's time this would not have happened because the sentences were issued within the same day and done according to the law – so the offender would pay Rs.500 or whatever the small penalty was, and would then be released. There would no question of spending days in the Thana hanging in limbo waiting to be charged. So, both Mauveen and his cousin Salman said that they and their family and friends were all voting for the BSP the next time, because, if nothing else, the administration worked better under Mayawati:

Mayawati ran the government very well. There was punishment according to the law. Now, under the SP, the whole system is rotten and the police have themselves become "dons". I voted for the SP last time. We wanted the young leader, Akhilesh Yadav, to win. However, the next time, like my elders, I am going to vote for the BSP.²⁴⁰

In working-class neighbourhoods, there appeared to be widespread political revulsion against the criminal strongmen. As an informant confided:

²³⁹ Interview with Arman Khan, Auto-rickshaw, Agra, 20th May 2013.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Mauveen Sheikh, Auto rickshaw, Agra, 18th September, 2013.

When there is no work, what choice do the youth have but to take to crime? Nowadays you have to phone your Muslim leader or some Yadav you know to be let off.²⁴¹

The Samajwadi Party has left the Muslim working class in positions of complete dependence on patrons from their community. Rameez Malik's family runs a tourist taxi service, as well as a coaching centre. His family's social position has been bolstered by the Samajwadi Party. This is because the Samajwadi Party encourages and facilitates close associations between the bureaucracy and the Muslim elite. As he observes:

About 90 per cent of our community work as labourers in some form or another. They are very grateful and dependent on you if you help them. If you get them released from the police they will be very grateful to you, and will work for you and get things done for you.²⁴²

These accounts were gathered before the Muzaffarnagar riots, which occurred only a 100 kilometers away from Agra and Ghaziabad. In Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA, Muslim factory workers and security guards complained of extortion and fear, as well as a sharp rise in casual intimidation in wake of the riots.²⁴³ The also admitted to have little faith in the local Hindu-dominated constabulary, which no longer appeared to be constrained by senior officials and social norms of community policing. The change in state government appears to have shifted the administration's political priorities and policing strategies rather dramatically.

6.5. Upper Caste and Economic Elites support for the BSP's politics of policing

Improved law and order is the most widely acknowledged achievement of the BSP government. Dominant communities have used force to suppress the assertion of socially subjugated communities. The communities at the receiving end of violent conflict are usually Dalits, members of the backward castes, and Muslims. However, poor Brahmins and the urban working class and lower-middle class are also at the mercy of violence exercised by feudal and neo-feudal communities. Accordingly, changes to the manner in which the police operated formed an important part of the modus through which the BSP could deliver on a performative or a programmatic basis for its working-class constituencies. This was something that was testified to by respondents from across the political

²⁴¹ Interview with Hamid Sheikh, Agra, 6th May, 2013.

²⁴² Interview with Rameez Raza Malik, Agra, 23rd August, 2013.

²⁴³ Interview with Babu Khan, Dilshad Gardens, Ghaziabad, October 5th, 2013.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Ajit Muhammad Khan, MK Leather Works, Sahibabad, October 11th, 2013.

spectrum. Parashuram Sharma, a Brahmin college lecturer from Ghaziabad, argues that the Mayawati government's authoritarian tendencies were appreciable in a state like UP. According to him:

The public is very troubled by the high rate of crime that has pushed UP backwards now that the SP has come to power. India needs strong authoritarian leaders who bring fear into the minds of the police, so that they act to get work done. That's why we need Modi in the Centre and Mayawati running the state from Lucknow.²⁴⁵

According to a Brahmin businessman from Ghaziabad:

The Yadav and Muslim mafias which carry out kidnapping and extortion are thriving under the SP, even if this means that the business people are suffering. Mayawati is a Dalit. She only took money from big industrialists and big corporate conglomerates. She left the small businessman and the *aam aadmi* (ordinary person) alone and also ensured law and order.²⁴⁶

This is something that cuts across caste and class as well. However, it is a particularly important for poorer voters who were more likely to vote for the BSP in the first place. These groups do not have access to social connections that would provide them immunity from police harassment. Small-business owners in urban areas are particularly vulnerable to rent-seeking from politically well-connected strongmen. For instance, Pandit Bhagvan Das Sharma owns a tea-stall in Agra. When the SP regime came to power, he reports, his income was sharply reduced because of constant extortion demands:

An SP politician came to my stall and demanded one lakh rupees. I do not have the money. All my savings have been spent on my son's university education. So we agreed to a deal where I would pay him 50,000 rupees in monthly instalments. Where is the police? The police must be getting a cut from this leader, because there is a police station just one road away and yet the police won't do anything to help me. This is an awful government, where the policemen are on the side of the criminals, and attack the victims of crime. Look at the papers yourself. In Aligarh a child was raped. When the parents and neighbours protested, the police beat *them* with *lathis*, and nothing happened to the criminals.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Interview with Parashuram Sharma, 25th September 2013. Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Abhay Paliwal, 30th May 2013. Private Residence, Delhi.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Bhagwan Das Sharma, 15th May. Tea Shop, Agra.

After having experienced a state that functioned relatively well for five years, urban voters resent having to return to state of dependence on strongmen, and the uncertainty that comes with increased crime. This was a common refrain across urban UP. The police functioned very differently under the two regimes. There is a significant depoliticisation of policing under any BSP regime. The police are provided a modicum of autonomy, with high priority given to ensuring that violence and crime is curtailed. As a bureaucrat from Ghaziabad observes:

Under the SP, every policeman enjoys protection from a political patron. The SSP and the DM are moved around a lot by the Station Officer. The Daroga and the Thaanedaar, they always stay in the same place and precinct. So they are steeped in corruption. They have political patrons who require their help keeping rivals away, registering cases and arresting rivals. Under the BSP, the local politicians don't have control over the police force. The policeman loses patronage from local politicians, so he has to be a lot more careful²⁴⁸.

A prominent Brahmin and elite critic of the BSP government conceded that even senior politicians lost any sense of impunity under the Dalit party's rule. The authoritarian style of the Chief Minister was illustrated in the manner in which strongmen ministers were punished for violent crimes. As Sharath Pradhan, an otherwise vocal critic of the BSP, observes:

As for herself, Mayawati clearly knew how to build her image as one who meant business – be it dealing with politicians or with bureaucrats. The real turning point came in 2007, when she ordered arrest of her own party MP for his indulgence in acts of violence and goondaism [hooliganism]. No sooner than she saw news flashes of some poor people being beaten up and terrorised by her party's Azamgarh [Member of Parliament] Uma Kant Yadav, she summoned him to her residence the following day. And while the MP was waiting for an audience with her at her residence lounge, Mayawati called up the state police chief, Vikram Singh, to get the MP arrested.

It was this one act that also gave the cops a relatively free hand in dealing with those who otherwise get away by flaunting their political affiliations. And at the same time, it instilled a sense of security among common citizens (Pradhan, 2013, 1).

²⁴⁸ Interview with R. Rajput, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh State Revenue Department, October 5th 2013.

Saleem Kidwai, a historian from the state capital of Lucknow, recalls very similar accounts the previous time a Samajwadi Party came to power following a BSP administration:

As law and order deteriorated, there was nostalgia for Mayawati because she got ‘things done’. ‘She never bothered about hierarchy,’ a police officer recalled. ‘If there was trouble, she herself called the remotest of *thanas* [police station] and gave orders.’ (Kidwai, 2007, 1).

A crime reporter from central UP informed a pair of political scientists,

In the BSP regime, banditry and brigandage was completely wiped out. However, the networks and weapons remained intact. If the government shows even a moment of indiscipline, then there will be banditry again. This SP government seems to have extended indirect support to them in lieu of political benefits. SP was infamous for this in earlier times as well (Tiwari and Pandey, 2013, 245).

Having chosen competent and loyal officers at the top and operating through trusted lieutenants in the bureaucracy, elected politicians and political power brokers working for the BSP do not have the ability to influence transfers and postings.

6.6. Informal Networks, Force and the State: The Tajganj Thana in Agra, An Ethnographic Vignette of a Police Check-post (*Chawki*)

The SP is poorly represented in urban Agra and Ghaziabad. Its support base in these urban centres comes from district elites who use their rural economic and social capital to make urban transitions. Mr Paliwal, a socialist politician from Agra, is a critic of the BSP. He described the party as antithetical to his own socialist values and argued against what he saw as Jatav patronage politics masquerading as lower-caste empowerment. However, the way he described the situation under the current Samajwadi Party’s political administration reflected his genuine anguish at the absolute collapse of basic government. Mr Paliwal describes one instance of criminality in Agra that particularly aggrieved him:

Mulayam Singh’s man came from Etawah and he captured land in Agra. This was public land that was simply grabbed. The local people protested that land that was attached to a local temple was being grabbed so that this gangster-politician could use it as real estate. The local BSP legislator, Thakur Swayamwar Singh, showed up at the scene in order to put a stop to this illegal land-grab. Whatever criticism you may have against this man- and I have many- in this instance he was correct. He was doing his job representing the

interests of his constituents. And they slapped a police charge on him for doing his job. Mulayam Singh's man who is not even from Agra, had the ability to sway the local police force in a way that allowed them to put criminal charges on our legislator.²⁴⁹

The Tajganj *Thana* [Police Station] is the only wholly air-conditioned police station in the region and enjoys an annual budget of Rs.2 crore (20 million), a phenomenal sum by any standards anywhere in India.²⁵⁰ As the Taj Mahal generates considerable revenue for the city and the state, and given the persistent threat of terrorism, the police officers posted here were of extremely well-connected and of high calibre. These posts were reputedly lucrative, given the considerable opportunities for bribes.

All the police officers, bar two, are Yadavs. Two Jatav officers who were posted here, because under the BSP regime, the state government had made it mandatory for at least two officers in every police post to be Dalits. Otherwise, all the other officers were Yadavs. The Station House Officer, the *Daroga*, was himself a migrant to Agra from rural Firozabad, further to the east of the city. There were some tensions between the Yadav police officers and their Jatav colleagues when the issue of reservation was discussed. The Dalits were more softly spoken and less assertive than their Yadav counterparts. However, their professional identity as police officers and the camaraderie of service seemed to override these differences. In fact, according to Ravish Yadav:

Caste is going to matter less and less over the next few years. Instead we are going to have more and more focus on religion and community. It's going to be all about faith and community after this.²⁵¹

When some Samajwadi Party politicians showed up in a large van, the Yadav officers went to pay obeisance while the Jatav officers stayed back. It was clear that the politicians who were demanding deference from the police officers were from the Samajwadi Party and they also had "Yadav" written across their vehicle. The police officers lined up quickly for their inspection. The police personnel were quick to rush and pay obeisance as if their jobs and promotions depended on it. Ravish Yadav and all other Yadav officers go to greet and shake hands with the SP politicians bearing the party flag. They are very deferential to these politicians, and there is clearly a strong sense of bonhomie and kinship that comes across as almost clannish, as their back slapping and smiling suggested. The Dalit police officers stayed behind, even as they watched this display of amity between the uniformed Yadav officers and the Yadav political bosses with a detached and slightly chilly curiosity. However,

²⁴⁹ Interview with Vinay Paliwal, Haldiram Sweets, Agra, August 17th, 2013.

²⁵⁰ Interview with Daroga Yadav, Tajganj Thana, Agra, 20th May, 2013.

²⁵¹ Interview with Ravish Yadav, Agra, 20th May, 2013.

once the politicians leave, the Yadav officers expressed no great sympathy for the Samajwadi Party government. They were very free in expressing their disdain. They were loyal SP voters and Yadavs too, so they felt entitled to express their opinions freely. Daroga Yadav explained:

Oh, politicians are always making promises, whether it is for laptops or development...but their ability to actually implement anything like this, which leaves much to be desired – don't you agree, boys?²⁵²

The fact that police officers, dependent on the patronage of local politicians, freely express their political opinions and their dissatisfaction with their party says something about the extent to which India's democracy has evolved. The perverse accountability that Stokes (2005) describes still exists, demonstrated by the manner in which the police officers had to rush out to display deference to the local politicians. However, they still felt secure enough to express their opinions without fear of reprisal. This indicated the extent to which older structures of clientelism were eroding. The police were not afraid to voice criticism of the Samajwadi Party and express admiration for Narendra Modi. Moreover, despite the strength of and pride in their caste identity as Yadavs, they also had a strong sense of professional identity as officers, and they clearly also resented political interference in their work. Both the Jatav officer and his colleague, Rahul, remonstrated furiously against the manner in which police officers were put upon:

We are caught between all sides. The public does not trust us. The politicians prevent us from doing our work properly, and nowadays there is the media and human rights organisations that constantly keep an eye on us. We then tried to set up a trade union and the senior officers quashed all attempts at this.²⁵³

These police officers knew how to work within the system of loyalties and favours, having paid many bribes to be posted to this lucrative post-this being among the richest police jurisdictions in the entire state. Even so, they clearly resented infringements on their professional authority as police officers, having taken competitive exams and worked hard to achieve their positions.

This fury and resentment was particularly visible when two men on a motorcycle raced past the traffic barrier in clear violation of all security rules and regulations. These men felt entitled to engage in such brazen behaviour because they had plastered a Samajwadi Party flag on their motorcycle. They

²⁵² Interview with Daroga Yadav, Tajganj Thana, 20th May, 2013.

²⁵³ Interview with Constable Rajiv Yadav, Tajganj Thana, 20th May, 2013.

were advertising their political connections and using it as a license to breach the norms put in place to protect the historical monument.

Despite being affiliated with the same political party, Mr Yadav strode over to the motorcyclists with his hands clenched in fists of rage, clearly committed to carrying out his duty as police officer in charge of protecting the monument. The men on the motorcycle are not impressed. They insulted the officer in the foulest Hindi with particular references to his mother and his sister. Yadav was furious but was placated by the avuncular station officer, whose job was to make peace between these small-time party politicians and the officers under his command. Part of his duty entails allowing these men to continue to flout the rules and regulations, something that clearly goaded Ravish Yadav. There was nothing he could do. These men had a party flag and therefore the license to carry on in a manner that posed a security risk, and they also exposed India's most beautiful monument to destructive diesel fumes. Rajiv Yadav swung his rifle in alarming fury but then contained his anger. He then directed his anger upwards at the state's Chief Minister and his caste fellow:

If you would compare real Ghee (clarified butter) and Dalda (a hydrogenated vegetable oil), then you can say that *Asli Ghee* provides a lot more *josh* [strength and vitality] and with the Chief Minister, there is none of that real Ghee. Instead, like a poor butter substitute we constantly left with a bad taste in our mouths...If you put one fresh new wheel on a car but leave three old wheels on the car, then what kind of smooth drive do you expect? That's how it is with the new government. There is no real change, just disappointment and broken promises. We are angry and are going to vote for the BJP.²⁵⁴

Alongside very frankly articulated frustration with their own party leaders, there was palpable resentment against Muslims among the police officers. While the police force was wholly Hindu, the peddlers, auto-rickshaw drivers tour guides, small shopkeepers and craftsman around the Taj Mahal are predominantly Muslim. Much of the police officers' work also involved detaining and confiscating the goods of the Muslims, who appeared rather cowed and sullen in face of a staunchly Hindu constabulary. Rahul, the most vocal and articulate of the police officers on duty, openly expressed anger with what he described as the criminality of Muslims who have the backing of local politicians:

²⁵⁴ Interview with Rajiv Yadav, Tajganj Thana, Agra, May 20th, 2013.

In 30 years' time, there will be no Yadav, no Jatav, we will be finished with caste divides, instead, there will be only Hindu and Muslim.²⁵⁵

When it was time for me to go home, Ravish Yadav cheerful commandeered a tourist trolley to drop me to my destination. The power of the police over the small business folk who live around the Tajganj area is rather complete and domineering. It means that the police and those associated with the police have the ability to extort money from the small traders and peddlers in a manner that leaves the mainly Muslim traders rather embittered against the UP constabulary. Poorer citizens are particular hard hit by the heavy-handedness of the police.

There is also almost universal agreement that policing has deteriorated considerably since the BSP left office and the Samajwadi Party returned to power. Mohan Kumar, a soft-spoken Jatav Dalit police officer from a middle-class background, explains that the change in government had its biggest impact on the state constabulary. However, he refused to elaborate arguing that "it is against the Constitutional morality to express party-political opinions when wearing my uniform".²⁵⁶ Mr Kumar then invited me to drink some orange juice with him. Unlike his Yadav colleagues, he paid the juice-seller the correct amount for the juice. This behaviour came across as rather unusual given the impunity with which police act in urban UP. According to Riddhi Bhandari, an anthropologist working on the informal economy of tourism, this behaviour is far from surprising. She maintains that a Dalit officer "would feel obliged to help his community and would not be keen to be seen exploiting his own community".²⁵⁷

6.7. Conclusion

The politics of the police provides a very important and interesting vantage point into the practical polices as well as the ideological agenda of the two main political parties. It also points to the *divergent* social and political interests of the core constituencies of the two political parties. The centralised nature of the BSP political administration appears to have impressed members of the urban elite and intelligentsia, who are traditionally among the vociferous opponents of the stridently Dalit decidedly non-elite BSP. This is most clearly reflected in the sharp contrast between the administrative record of the BSP and SP with regard to law and order.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Rajiv Yadav, Tajganj Thana, Agra, May 20th, 2013.

²⁵⁶ Interview with Mohan Kumar, Tajganj Thana, Agra, May 21st, 2013.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Riddhi Bhandari, Agra, May 25th 2013.

When the Samajwadi Party comes to power, district elites and dominant landed castes actively collude with the local constabulary to gain access to the local state. This has an adverse impact on upper castes, Dalits and poorer Muslims who do not enjoy the patronage of Samajwadi Party politicians. Under the SP, the state operates as an “informalised” entity that uses informality as an instrument of accumulation and arbitrary power. The social power of the SP’s favoured communities derives from the ability to monopolise access to power when the Yadav-led party is in power. This enables rent-seeking and challenges to the authority of traditional elites (Michelutti, 2007). The empowerment of dominant Yadavs and Muslims also acts to suppress Dalit assertion.

The Bahujan Samaj Party is certainly different. As Sudha Pai observes, the state plays a crucial and critical role in the BSP’s political agenda. This is a statist and pro-system party (Pai, 2002). It seeks to capture state power through the ballot box and then use the state in a top-down manner in order to transform social relations between castes (Pai, 2009). The BSP’s state government’s approach to urban policing reflects this most clearly, with the most practical consequences for mundane social relations in urban Uttar Pradesh.

7. Conclusion: Caste and the spatial dimensions of urban politics

7.1. The Indian city as the prime arena for political agency.

In the contemporary Indian context, the city has emerged as a vitally important arena for conflict and contestation between different social groups. Democratisation does not follow a linear trajectory, and it does not only entail progressive outcomes. Informal networks and economic resources allow for easier access to education and employment in towns and cities. At the same time, they reinforce caste-based inequality. Caste and occupation overlap in urban India. Caste and kinship ties remain salient in urban contexts. At the same time, political competition between social groups is made material in efforts to rearrange spatial arrangements as means of projecting power. The concentration of political, economic and cultural power, Stephanie Lama-Rewal and Helen Zerah argue, transform cities into:

...a privileged theatre for different forms of demonstrative politics that is often – but not always – democratic. Cities are a foremost site for the performance of contentious politics – struggles whose object often goes much beyond the city itself (Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zerah, 2011, 8).

James Holston's description of urban conflict in Brazil has parallels with social conflicts in urban Uttar Pradesh. Democracy unleashes conflict and destabilises inherited patterns of authority (Tocqueville, 1835; Mehta, 2010). According to James Holston:

There is a fundamental paradox: the equalities of democratic citizenship always produce new inequalities, vulnerabilities, and destabilisations, as well as the means to contest them. Thus the equal rights of citizens to associate generate organisations of unequal capacities and powers (Holston, 2008, 273).

Liberalisation and economic growth have done little to seriously challenge the structural and relational underpinnings of inequality.

...on-going spatial and class reconfigurations have not resulted in more heterogeneous urban spaces [instead] they have led to a rather unexpected reproduction of homogenous spatial arrangements and representations in which caste, class and locality have once again come to overlap (De Neve, 2006, 41).

Spatial arrangements are an important means of reproducing and maintaining social dominance. Democracy unleashes conflict and destabilises inherited patterns of authority (Tocqueville, 1835;

Mehta, 2010). Holston argues the process of democratic consolidation is not ‘cumulative, linear, or evenly distributed among citizens but always a mix of progressive and regressive elements, unbalanced, heterogeneous and corrosive’ (Holston, 2008, 311). Consequently, the struggles by India’s urban elites and ordinary citizens are at the forefront of shaping formal and informal institutions of urban government. These are contestations for the ability to control urban space.

7.2. The BSP and the urban politics of Inter-Caste Accommodation.

This investigation into the BSP has sought to understand how the Dalit-led party sought to insert itself in urban power networks in Agra and Ghaziabad. The political character of each city is shaped by its political economy and the sociological make-up. This thesis demonstrates the extent to which urban politics involves a patchwork of local alliances between politically influential castes and communities.

Urban power relations are determined by caste-based economic niches. Inter-caste co-operation blends political agency with economic activity. Politics involves a struggle for control over the state. State governments must collaborate with locally powerful groups in order to construct viable urban political coalitions. Political entrepreneurs seek to gain control over economic activity in major urban centres. The construction of power networks centred on the political control of economic activity reflect the social changes unleashed by the Silent Revolution.

Historically marginalised communities rely on political entrepreneurs for access to the state’s resources. Traditional elites continue to exert disproportionate influence over local politics through their preponderance in commerce and the bureaucracy. This has enabled the Bharatiya Janata Party to retain power over municipal politics in both Agra and Ghaziabad. Nonetheless, upper-caste elites remain compelled to accommodate elites from subaltern castes who rely on their connections with state-level political elites from the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party. In both Agra and Ghaziabad the composition of the BSP’s power networks are determined by the relative affluence, social standing and political influence of the each individual city’s diverse caste-based political agencies.

In Agra, the Jatav community is unusually wealthy. There is a preponderance of Jatav political entrepreneurs associated primarily with the BSP but also with the BJP, the Congress and the Samajwadi Party. Jatav political entrepreneurs are primarily civil servants, lawyers, leather manufacturers and factory owners. Despite their relative affluence and social standing, wealthy and middle-class Jatavs rely on the BSP as their primary vehicle of social advancement.

Despite the central role played by Jatavs as skilled workmen and artisans, Vaisya and Panjabi commercial networks preponderate in export, finance and distribution markets in the leather industry. Small-scale Jatav entrepreneurs rely on Vaisyas, Panjabis and newly affluent Qureshi Muslims to access credit and bring their goods to market. When in power, the BSP government provided subsidies, tax-breaks and soft loans to Jatavs. Such measures enabled Jatav manufacturers to secure a degree of commercial independence from Vaisya commercial monopolies.

Moreover, the presence of Muslim political entrepreneurs associated with the BSP also enabled co-operative economic partnerships between Jatavs and Muslims in the leather industry as well as in the light urban transport industry. Jatav political entrepreneurs have also gained access to the real-estate and hospitality industry. Successive BSP governments have enhanced the social influence of important Jatav bureaucrats in the city, and helped construct a Jatav middle-class associated with the civil service. The BSP's stringent and complete implementation of affirmative action and the community's emphasis on education ensured Jatavs gained significant employment in the civil service. This was especially true for the BSP's tenure as a full-term government, which resulted in the appointment of Jatavs to the highest posts of state authority in Agra.

There are also prominent and wealthy Jatavs in the Samajwadi Party, and Bharatiya Janata Party. Nonetheless, these parties are primarily favoured by middle-classes from smaller, less influential Dalit groups, including the Balmiki, who are excluded from the higher echelons of the BSP's local political hierarchy.

Politics in Agra and Ghaziabad is also considerably influenced by the wealth and social status of landowning communities associated with agrarian districts outside the municipal corporation's boundaries. These groups are accommodated into the city's political power primarily through the Agra Development Authority and the Yamunna Expressway Industrial Development Authority in Agra. In Ghaziabad farming communities are accommodated through the Ghaziabad, NOIDA, Greater NOIDA and Yamunna Expressway Industrial Development Authorities.

In both cities, the municipal corporation and the urban area within the municipal boundaries remain the preserve of Brahmin, Vaisya, and Panjabi Khatrees. Upper caste power networks are complemented by the presence of Rajputs and aristocratic Jat and Yadav families with sufficient levels of cultural capital and wealth to access the informal institutions of upper caste urban power. The BJP and to a lesser extent, the Congress dominate upper caste political agency in both Agra and Ghaziabad. Intermediate landowning communities including poorer Rajputs Jats, Yadavs, Gurjars

and landowning Muslims exert greater influence over the politics urban development through urban development authorities. Their wealth, social status and political influence derives from their landholdings located outside the city's municipal limits but within the jurisdiction of various urban development authorities.

In Agra, the vote of the intermediate castes is divided between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party. However, in Ghaziabad, the BSP has been unusually successful in establishing political alliances between Gurjars and Dalits. These coalitions were constructed through the strategic use of urban development authorities. In the entire National Capital Region, the BSP compensated for its lack of influence in elite-controlled urban areas by awarding Gurjar political entrepreneurs as political patrons governing the political economy of urban development. This was achieved by close co-operation between BSP officials and Gurjar entrepreneurs who implemented the BSP's pro-business policies in the NCR. The BSP compensated for the relative poverty and marginality of Dalits in Ghaziabad by accommodating intermediate elites from the Gurjar community. Gurjar entrepreneurs were placed in key positions of local authority in order to facilitate the rapid acquisition of farmland for expansive Public Private Partnerships. Elite-level partnerships were established between Gurjar political enterers and Dalit bureaucrats.

In Agra, the Jatav community dominated the party's power networks in the city. As the data from expenditure on the 2013 Bhimnagari programme indicates, Jatav political networks continue to wield sufficient political influence required to access public funds from the local municipal corporation and the development authority even after the BSP lost state-wide office. The city's Jatav political class effectively occupies the role of an intermediate elite in the city.

Political entrepreneurs from the city's Muslim community continue to exert significant political influence over the city's BSP. Prominent among these are Muhammad Bashir, the first person to successfully contest the Agra Cantonment assembly seat on behalf of the BSP in 2002, and Zulfikar Qureshi, who held the seat in 2007. Muhammad "Chaudhary" Bashir, is a self-made entrepreneur who started his life as tourist taxi driver, while Zulifkar Bhutto inherited his leather and meat-export business. Muslims, who dominate the light transport industry the city, rely on the BSP and its Dalit bureaucratic networks to access the state, where few Muslims have gained employment in the post-independence. At the same time, Muslims in the city divide their vote between the Samajwadi Party and the BSP. The SP is better able to provide Muslims with access to commercial networks through power networks dominated by wealthy dominant castes from Yadav, Jat and even Rajput

communities. Nonetheless, Muslims must contend with conflicting factional interests within the Yadav-led party.

In Agra, this is best demonstrated by the Samajwadi Party government's decision to block the city's main causeways to auto-rickshaws, an industry dominated by Muslims. The decision benefits wealthy Rajputs, Yadavs and Jats transporters and bus operators associated with the Samajwadi Party as it raised a major barrier to entry to mainly Muslim and Jatavs employed in the auto-rickshaw industry. Yadavs, along with other landed dominant castes, resent the Samajwadi Party's reliance on Muslim voters and intra-party factional conflict has resulted in violence across Western Uttar Pradesh, since the Samajwadi Party came to power. The ability of Samajwadi Party politicians to influence and favour police officers at local precincts reflects the decentralized structure of the party. It has resulted in the involvement the state constabulary in the SP's factional conflicts. Conversely, the BSP's centralized and authoritarian structure ensured that police officers were appointed by Chief Ministerial aides in Lucknow. This prevented factional conflict at the local level. The BSP's centralized nature ensured the appointment of bureaucrats and the allocation of contracts and tenders were managed by the party's top-down hierarchy. Under the Samajwadi Party, the party's powerful regional barons and factional chiefs ensure a decentralization of the decision-making process with regard to appointments, contracts and tenders.

The Samajwadi Party's preferential treatment of Yadavs parallels the BSP's preferential treatment of Jatavs. Nonetheless, the Dalit-led party has an interest in enforcing bureaucratic centralization and legal norms with regard to appointments. This is the only way the Dalit-led party can retain the continued support of the party's newly accommodated Upper caste elites from all castes. In particular, the BSP continues to rely on the support of Brahmins and Kayasthas, who dominated the ranks of the senior state bureaucracy. The BSP transferred power from political entrepreneurs to the bureaucracy, as this enables more systemic control over the state by the party's towering authoritarian leader, Mayawati. The SP reverses this process, as the mainly Yadav and Muslim party draws strength from regional barons, landowners and private entrepreneurs associated with real-estate, construction and transport. The Samajwadi Party Chief Minister, Akhilesh Yadav, must defer to his father, uncle, and other older political leaders with long-standing associations with the party. In both Agra and Ghaziabad, the decentralised Samajwadi hierarchy results in a plethora of factional conflicts over political influence, access to the state and therefore the ability to control the

process of urban economic activity. Under the BSP, factional conflicts are controlled by the empowered state bureaucracy and district zonal co-ordinators appointed by the party leader.

Political entrepreneurs are able to use caste and kinship ties to mitigate class differences. Jatav and Muslim exporters, factory owners, hoteliers, and real-estate entrepreneurs are able to provide employment and patronage to working-class kinsfolk. Jatav bureaucrats and social workers provide the Dalit urban poor with access to the state's welfare benefits and service delivery arms.

The BSP has also accommodated Brahmins in Agra in order to reach out to multi-caste constituencies, as the community continues to play the role of a local intelligentsia with cultural capital and informal social influence. Working-class Brahmins are particularly attracted to the party, unlike wealthy ones who prefer the BJP. In Ghaziabad, the relative poverty of Dalits prevents the community from challenging the entrenched dominance of upper castes and wealthy landed castes. Consequently, it has been possible for the party to accommodate upper castes, OBCs and Muslims as the major political personnel for the party in the city. These communities enjoy influence from their political association with the city's largest party, and are able to engage in reciprocal arrangements with the BSP's influential bureaucratic elite in the National Capital Region.

Major upper caste and Gurjar patrons have also provided the city's poorer Dalits with access economic activity through sub-contracts and employment in the city's real-estate and construction industries. These industries boomed under the BSP government's pro-business policies. At the same time, urban upper caste political entrepreneurs and Gurjar landowners facilitated the migration of Dalits and MBCs to urban villages and new migrant colonies in Ghaziabad, ensuring the increase in voters favourably inclined towards the BSP. Ghaziabad's urban population expanded by 40% in decade preceding the BSP's political ascension in the National Capital Region in 2012 (Census of India, 2011, District Handbook Ghaziabad). Similarly, rural migration to Agra, some of it forced by violence and atrocities, facilitated a 40% increase in the city's population between 1991 and 2001 (Agra District Handbook, Census of India, 2001). This may have ensured continuous BSP victories in Agra from the 2002 state elections onwards.

The BSP owes its electoral success in both cities to pro-business power networks which also accommodated the material interests of working-class migrants through state-sponsored affordable housing schemes in both cities. The party's dedicated lower middle-class and working-class cadre was also able to mobilise new migrants to the city. In Agra, the party established a connection with migrants fleeing poverty and caste violence through the promise of future access to the state, once

the party secured state power. In Ghaziabad and the NCR, the BSP's party cadre took advantage of a BSP state government between 2007 and 2012 to provide access to lucrative state-controlled resources. This was necessarily the case, given the nature of the BSP's multi-caste coalition in the city, which expressed little to no enthusiasm in the party's ideology of Dalit emancipation and caste consciousness.

The BSP sought entry into urban Uttar Pradesh through the pragmatic politics of accommodation with existing traditional elites. The BSP has struggled to retain control over municipal politics given the barriers to entry erected by upper caste elite groups, who control economic activity, elite urban institutions and preponderate in urban areas. Nonetheless, the BSP has made inroads into municipal politics in urban Uttar Pradesh, relying on the votes of the urban poor and tactical alliances with affluent political entrepreneurs. This is the case in Allahabad, where Abhilasha Gupta, a Vaisya, won the mayoral elections on a BSP ticket. In Ghaziabad, the BSP's entry into municipal and state-level politics was only possible because of the BSP's strategic alliances with Gurjars and upper castes who provide the Dalit party with essential economic resources, and social networks. In Agra, the BSP has been able to rely on Jatav power networks to sustain politics in the city. Nonetheless, the party continues to rely on upper caste political entrepreneurs in order to forge coalitions with traditional elite social groups and Muslims in the city.

Upper caste political leaders matter to the BSP, because they are able to overcome the social exclusion experienced by Dalits. At the same time, these tactical coalitions with non-Dalit entrepreneurs require a material basis in order to remain durable. The loyalty of political entrepreneurs can only be retained through material inducements. Consequently, the BSP state government invested in pro-business politics in order to sustain its multi-caste electoral coalition. The incorporation of elite patrons into the BSP, also helped facilitate the provision of material welfare to the party's core vote among working-class and lower-middle class Dalits. Political entrepreneurs from non-Dalit communities played a significant role in the implementation of housing and affordable housing schemes. The BSP remains dependent on non-Dalit political entrepreneurs and commercial actors to implement public investment projects in urban areas, even in Agra where Jatavs enjoy unusual levels of access to the local state.

The BSP has made significant inroads in the municipal politics of both Agra and Ghaziabad. The Dalit-led party has emerged as the main challenger to the BJP. The expansion of the Dalit middle class, through state employment and the BSP's strategy of appointing Dalits at the head of the formal

institutions of urban government, has greatly enhanced the influence of Dalit power networks in Agra. The BSP has also provided an expansive political opportunity structure for Dalits in Ghaziabad, even as Dalits remain subordinate to Gurjars and upper castes in the BSP's political opportunity structures in the National Capital Region.

As a consequence of preferential treatment from the BSP state government, Dalits gained unprecedented access to urban economic activity in both Agra and Ghaziabad. The BSP relies on local political elites to sustain electoral support in both cities. The BSP co-opted intermediate elites from non-Dalit communities play an important role in providing Dalits with access to economic activity.

The BSP was able to take advantage of the unique political conditions of both cities to gain electoral advantage. The BSP was able to take advantage of Ghaziabad's proximity to Delhi, and ensure that the higher levels of economic activity in the National Capital Region, benefitted the party politically in the city. In Agra, the BSP could draw on a tradition of Dalit political activism and the standing of a Dalit middle class to establish power networks in the city. In both cities, political entrepreneurs derive affluence, social status and favourable connections with the bureaucracy from their association with the BSP.

7.3. The BSP's power networks after the 2012 electoral defeat.

Despite the BSP's loss of state power, the BSP's political networks have endured in both Agra and Ghaziabad. This is due to the significant presence of BSP legislators, councillors and former Members of Parliament, who retain their elite status through economic assets and political influence. The political influence of the BSP's power networks is much diminished since the Samajwadi Party returned to power. Nonetheless, the presence of senior bureaucrats and politicians associated with the BSP ensures Dalits retain access to the state and to economic resources. Dalits rely on informal access to state bureaucrats to secure loans, economic wherewithal, and police protection. The district administration ensures protection to Dalit cultural performances and continues to transfer economic funds aimed specifically for Dalits. The significant presence of Dalit bureaucrats ensures access to the state and its beneficence.

Muslims do not enjoy the same access to the state as is enjoyed by Dalits. The community continues to rely on political patrons associated with the Samajwadi Party and the BSP, to provide protection and economic benefits. Consequently, the community's lack of access to the state has resulted in victimisation by the police, despite the election of a pro-Muslim Samajwadi Party. The SP's

decentralised administration has empowered the local police to engage in rent-seeking. The decentralisation of power has undermined the administrative apparatus of the state. This empowers informal political institutions controlled by Samajwadi Party leaders, but has left the state prone to higher levels of violence and political instability.

The manner in which political entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens seek to gain entry into the urban political economies of Agra and Ghaziabad depends on the availability political and institutional options. It has been this dissertation's contention that urban political regimes are crucially important sources of political agency in urban Uttar Pradesh. These constitute the informal arrangements between political elites, commercial groups, and senior bureaucrats in positions of authority in the official institutions of urban government.

The informal associations, which are regulated by caste networks as well as by intermediary agencies, are led by political entrepreneurs with durable, trust-based connections with the local bureaucracy. These networks regulate economic activity. They provide commercial elites with access to the local state, which controls the allocation of considerable lucrative economic resources. This is particularly the case for the key economic centres of Agra and Ghaziabad.

In Agra, Dalit groups relied on the BSP as their vehicle for upward mobility in a historically upper-caste city. Agra experienced the most rapid population growth between 1991 and 2001, as the city's population expanded by 40% (Census of India, 2001). This is the period when the BSP made its first inroads into the city. The BSP consolidated its position at the forefront of politics in Agra in the subsequent decade.

As a party of government, the BSP prioritised transferring economic resources to Dalit neighbourhoods and migrant settlements. Dalit politics in Agra has centred on the issues of affordable housing and gaining security of tenure for migrant settlements. Securing official recognition for Dalit neighbourhoods are central to the material needs of working-class Dalits. Dalit neighbourhoods are also the sites of factories, warehouses and workshops. The regularisation of such neighbourhoods ensures its residents gain the benefits associated with having permanent addresses and access to welfare payments and basic services.

The BSP also promoted the interests of Dalit entrepreneurs especially in the leather manufacturing, tourism and real-estate industries. The Dalit entrepreneurs provide patronage and economic resources to working-class voters across Agra.

The emergence of Dalit patrons and non-Dalit clients testify to the extent to which caste politics has complicated traditional caste hierarchies, and ensured the creation of Dalit elites. At the same time, the BSP accommodated political entrepreneurs from Rajput, Muslim and backward-caste communities. These facilitated economic partnerships between Dalits and non-Dalits in the city, whilst ensuring access to valuable state resources for the non-Dalit patrons within the city.

The BSP state government prioritised material concerns in the National Capital Region. In Ghaziabad, the BSP accommodated Gurjar patrons who derive wealth and social status from landownership outside the city, but exert considerable political influence within the city itself. The BSP relied on upper-caste and Gurjar patrons to promote economic growth in the National Capital Region. Economic growth facilitated lucrative rents for the state government and also provided the state with resources to create a multi-caste electoral coalition in Ghaziabad and Greater NOIDA. Gurjar patrons relied on the BSP state government to reinforce their position as important political patrons in the city. Through the BSP, Gurjar political entrepreneurs gained strategic control over lucrative forms of economic activity in the city.

7.4. The BSP, economic activity and urban government.

The BSP has been unusually successful in Agra and Ghaziabad. Even as its vote share eroded across the state, the BSP was able to retain its multi-ethnic electoral coalition in these two cities. In Agra, the party built on an inherited legacy of Dalit political activism. In Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region, the party made significant gains for the first time in 2012. It did so through its ability to co-opt commercial elites from non-Dalit communities into its political formation. In Agra and Ghaziabad, in the National Capital Region, urban regimes are constructed out of networks based around the Municipal Corporation, the Development Authority, the office of the District Magistrate, and other key offices of urban government, such as the District Urban Development Authority (DUDA) and the Department for Town and Country Planning. Urban economic activity, which relies on the easy availability land and real estate, requires the visible hand of the local state to reduce the transaction costs. The state's writ is critically important in this process of economic development. This lucrative arm of the state is also the most politically contested by political formations elected to the helm of state government.

The BSP established governing regimes which continues to wield considerable political power through its informal economic and political networks nurtured during their five years of absolute power. The BSP's trans-regional ambitions are exemplified in the creation of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority which co-ordinates economic activity across six

districts of Uttar Pradesh. These agencies retained their control over public resources and real estate even after the BSP lost the last state assembly elections. Even as the BSP lost the assembly elections in 2012, it was able to retain its power in the economically prosperous commercial centres of Agra and Ghaziabad. In Agra, their entry was most visible and significant in infrastructure, tourism and the leather industry. The Mayawati government instituted reforms which outlasted the BSP state government's term in office. The distribution of electricity remains in the hands of Torrent Power. The planned townships associated with the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority remain under the control of the public authority, which owes its creation to the BSP government.

The proliferation of luxury hotels and resorts around the Taj Mahal is another testament to the pro-business regime established by the BSP government. The promotion of senior Dalit bureaucrats in these governing arrangements, ensured that a portion of the significant rents generated were transferred to working-class Dalits. Even wealthy Dalits continue to reside in historically Dalit neighbourhoods. State officials retained control over the resources generated by the local state and ensured their neighbours and kinsfolk benefitted accordingly. Dalits gained jobs in infrastructure and tourism, while their neighbourhoods received development funds for their first time. The BSP's promotion of the leather industry was an important political concession to its core voters, who are disproportionately employed as skilled workmen in the industry.

The state government sought, successfully, to expand the number of Dalit exporters, factory owners and distributors in order to undercut the Jain/Vaishya monopoly over distribution in the city's leather industry. At the same time, the BSP remained compelled to accommodate corporate elites in order to secure the necessary capital to embark on its ambitious interventions in the local political economies. The BSP relied on the city's Jatav community, whose affluence and political influence is unique and firmly established, to construct intermediate regimes at the heart of local government. Intermediate elites from the Jatav community, provided the personnel and the social networks to ensure minimum disruption to the state government pro-business policies. Intermediate elites from this community also provide access to the local state, which enable the proliferation of philanthropy and self-help institutions amongst the city's Jatavs. Jatavs possess the numerical supremacy and economic independence necessary to control the institutions of local government.

The city's Jatav elites rely on the BSP government for privileged access to the senior most offices of urban government. The community is prioritised in the distribution of state-controlled resources. The Jatav elite loses its pre-eminence when the BSP leaves office. Nonetheless, the connections and reciprocal networks which place Jatavs firmly in position of political influence remain salient even

after the BSP loses state-wide office. The presence of BSP legislators, councillors and political entrepreneurs testify to the electoral viability, and political influence of the BSP in the city. The presence of Jatav exporters, business owners and philanthropists testifies to importance of the leather industry as a critical source of economic independence for the community.

In Ghaziabad, and in the National Capital Region, the BSP's approach towards the city's traditional elites was less confrontational. This urban area lacks the presence of a significant Dalit elite outside of the public sector. Instead, the BSP was compelled to construct intermediate regimes through collaborative arrangements with upper caste commercial elites and political entrepreneurs. It also constructed an intermediate regime by accommodating intermediate elites from the Gurjar community. Such strategic alliances enabled the BSP to ensure the rapid delivery of Public-Private Partnerships and growth-facilitating measures across the National Capital Region. The strategic location of intermediate elites makes their support crucial for state-level political formations to succeed in bringing about top-down policy changes. Pro-business regimes require the support of intermediate elites whose ability to block or facilitate capital-intensive projects places them in positions of considerable power and influence at the urban local level.

At the same time, political formations derive their legitimacy from elected office. They must pass on a share of monopoly rents to the communities who actually placed them in office. These require another set of institutional arrangements between political leaders, state officials and urban working-class communities. The Bahujan Samaj Party sought to provide expansive welfare measures to working-class Dalits through the state government as well as through political institutions and cultural organisations run by Dalit political activists and social workers. Social workers and political activists benefit from increased access to state officials and the posting of loyal Dalit officials into the key posts of government.

This includes the offices of District Magistrate, and the key representatives on the board of the urban Development Authorities in Agra and Ghaziabad. These officials were charged with the implementation of affordable housing schemes, slum development and regularisation schemes conceived by the party's state-wide leadership. The existence of parallel networks of Dalit bureaucrats and social workers means that these power networks persist even when the BSP state government leaves office. The presence of BSP legislators and Dalit social workers ensures that a portion of state resources intended for Dalits welfare remains. Data gathered from fieldwork indicates that funds sanctioned by the municipal authority are predominantly concentrated in neighbourhood

development schemes. In particular, there was a specific focus on providing civic amenities and infrastructure to Dalit neighbourhoods.

The expansion of state employment has ensured and increased the presence of Dalit civil servants who can provide the personnel, support networks and the monetary contributions for the community as a whole. This is especially because middle-class Dalit civil servants continue to live in close proximity to their Dalit kinsfolk and are expected to provide favours for their less affluent kinsfolk. The BSP has created intermediate regimes with considerable influence over the local state. In Agra, this has been achieved through the consolidation of linkages with the Jatav middle-class, in particular civil servants, small businessmen, and political activists. The placement of Jatav bureaucrats into position of allocative power, through the ability to grant licenses to large commercial enterprises and raise levies on economic activity, ensured the incorporation of Jatavs into rent-sharing arrangements at hitherto unprecedented levels.

The political processes governing land use and licensing have not been significantly altered by the Samajwadi Party government, even if the new government has sought to gain control of the rent-generating activities inaugurated by the BSP. In Ghaziabad, the political actors and processes which enabled the construction of 210 low-income colonies have remained intact.

The BSP's upper-caste political actors and commercial elites provided the land and the legal authorisation for these settlements. The party's local leadership established intricate co-ordination mechanisms which ensured the low-income colonies were segregated from elite real-estate development. This was done to prevent any adverse impacts on the land-values for high-end estate. At the same time, the BSP's upper-caste and Gurjar leaders ensured that inexpensive land was made available for working-class migrants who returned the favour by voting for the BSP. In Agra, political networks controlled by the local Jatav elite remain intact even if it is considerably reduced in political influence. The annual funding of the Bhimnagari Programme, as well as schemes providing civic amenities in hundreds of Dalit neighbourhoods across Agra, testifies to the durability of Jatav-led power networks. The local Jatav and non-Jatav leadership benefited from BSP rule. Senior Jatav bureaucrats who were strategically placed to implement urban development schemes, retained their posts even after the BSP left office. This testifies to their centrality in facilitating Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and state-funded economic activity. These officials have ensured the transfer of economic resources to Dalit neighbourhoods even after losing their dominance over local bureaucratic networks.

In Ghaziabad, and the National Capital Region, the BSP accommodated Gurjar intermediate elites to similar effect. In both cities, Jatav bureaucrats coordinated Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) with mainly non-Jatav contractors who benefited from the BSP state government's pro-business turn. The intermediate regimes coordinated by the BSP state government succeeded with the support of the BSP state government which empowered District Magistrates, Municipal Commissioners and senior officials in charge of the urban Development Authorities at the expense of elected urban local government. Such intermediate regimes suffered setbacks when the BSP lost power in the 2012 state assembly elections. Nonetheless, the BSP's legislators predominate in both Agra and Ghaziabad. The power networks of intermediate elites and bureaucrats have also remained durable, backed up by support systems of Dalit employees' trade unions and reciprocal relationship with local commercial elites.

Intermediate regimes have independent power bases of their own. Their presence acts as a brake against the authoritarian tendencies of the BSP. The countervailing power of intermediate elites as provides the necessary capacity and scope required to articulate political agency independent of state-level political elites. These regimes shape the unique political context of each urban area.

State governments must accommodate such political formations in order to retain control over lucrative economic activities. Nonetheless, the BSP's intermediate regime relies on the presence of a BSP state government in Lucknow for the greatest possible access to political power and bureaucratic authority. Without a favourable government in Lucknow, these regimes remain subordinate to the superior access and privileges enjoyed by the upper caste commercial elites of both cities. Intermediate elites from Gurjars and Jatavs cannot compete. The increase in electoral competition brought about by the increase in the number of effective political parties has facilitated the entry of historically excluded social groups into the political theatre. The BSP provides a noteworthy example.

The BSP's success in constructing urban regimes in Agra and the National Capital derives from its ability to craft electoral coalitions with traditional elites and intermediate elites on a quid-pro-quo basis in each legislative constituency. The BSP's ability to accommodate political entrepreneurs from social groups historically apathetic or hostile to Dalit advancement is a significant achievement. Consequently, this thesis argues, it makes sense for scholars to explore further the dynamics of multi-ethnic transformation in contemporary Indian politics. Previous scholarship on ethnic politics has focused on ethnic parties as dispensers of patronage and institutors of ethnic head counts (Chandra,

2004). This perspective is valid. However, it limits its focus to the role of ethnic parties' role in transferring state-controlled resources to their core ethnic group at the expense of rivals.

This thesis argues that the conditions of First-Past-the-Post electoral system and subaltern political assertion have also institutionalised inter-group bargaining, collaboration and compromise. As a party of urban government, the BSP was compelled to accommodate political entrepreneurs and commercial elites involved in the informal economy of the powerful. It has also institutionalised co-operative arrangements between intermediate elites and regimes who control the local state. The Dalit-led party has relied on accommodating political entrepreneurs from elite social groups in order to craft successful electoral coalitions between its loyal Dalit electorate and non-Dalit professional politicians. In urban areas, the rise of the Dalit party has also opened the door for informal arrangements between commercial elites and political entrepreneurs. In Agra, the BSP also had to implement similar measures, even if the party's Jatav power networks continue to ensure the city remains a BSP bastion.

The BSP has been able to overcome class and caste contradictions through its ability to offer political inducements to specific social groups within the given political geography. The party's pro-business policies helped retain the support of commercial elites, intermediate political elites with strong ties to landowning communities, and its core Dalit-Bahujan vote, even though each political constituency had very different class profiles.

The party's multi-ethnic transformation has been accompanied by an ideological shift from state socialism to the construction of pro-business state governments. The resource-generating potential of pro-business policies, alongside the potential for rent-seeking, are important pre-requisites for the sustenance of viable multi-ethnic electoral coalitions. The BSP's inability to institute similar arrangements in other regions of Uttar Pradesh may explain its setbacks elsewhere in the state.

The 2012 elections represented a major historical shift. The Dalit party actually performed better in wealthy urban areas and industrial centres of western Uttar Pradesh. On the other hand, its vote-share collapsed in the impoverished, agrarian central and eastern regions of the state. Perhaps the party's inability to significantly alter power relations in the feudal and agrarian east reflects the continued paucity of employment opportunities outside agriculture. This prevents the articulation of independent Dalit assertion. This is in stark contrast with the western region, where the BSP government's successfully leveraged the region's proximity to New Delhi into pro-business urban regimes in the National Capital Region and Agra. This provided the resources for welfare provision

for Dalits as well as patronage benefits for non-Dalits. Dalit economic independence also ensured greater access to the state. It also enabled the state government to deploy the police and other front-line agents of the state as a deterrent to the historical social dominance enjoyed by landed social groups.

In Agra, the BSP has retained the support of non-Jatav groups even as the party continues to operate as a vehicle for the sectional interests of the Jatav community. It has deployed Dalit nationalism and relied Dalit elites to sustain business and philanthropic institutions in order to cater to the interests of the community as a whole.

In Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region, the BSP's state-wide leadership has relied on local upper-caste, Gurjar and Muslim political patrons to provide patronage benefits and the implementation of programmatic schemes intended for the party's core vote among the Dalit working-class. Patrons from such influential groups were induced into alliances with the BSP. As the then incumbent party of government, it offered political entrepreneurs patronage positions and the ability to participate in reciprocal commercial relationships with senior bureaucrats. The BSP effectively bought off the opposition. The party's newly inducted upper-caste and Gurjar patrons used their connections and influence as social notables. They were able ensure minimal resistance to the BSP's pro-business and pro-Dalit agendas. Vaishya real estate developers and Gurjar contractors and Brahmin political entrepreneurs collaborated with the BSP state government to facilitate significant urban development projects across the National Capital Region.

This urban expansion continues even after the BSP left office, as the processes governing urban development have been institutionalised under the auspices of local and regional development authorities empowered by the BSP. Similar economic processes are visible in Agra. Moreover, the BSP's privatisation of electricity distribution has remained unchallenged. Certain arrangements organised by the senior state bureaucracy remain durable even after a change in government. The BSP's pro-business institutions were not seriously altered by the Samajwadi Party government. The SP government did, however, seek to deploy its own personnel at the helm of the BSP government's business arrangements in order to secure control over rent-sharing arrangements.

In Uttar Pradesh, the rise of lower-caste social groups has transformed the state, from a political fiefdom of national parties, into political arenas of intense competition by regional political actors. The caste-based Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party are also effectively powerful political entities only in the home state of their political leaders. They are one-caste, one-state parties. The two

parties have placed a greater emphasis on caste-based demands. Once in office, they sought to displace the inherited political networks and social institutions which govern and regulate economic activity in large urban centres of Uttar Pradesh. Nonetheless, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the main focus of this dissertation, has also had to make compromises with business elites and social notables in order to expand the party's electoral coalition, while also providing greater access to economic resources. Traditional elites who control urban local government and economic activity in both Agra and Ghaziabad. They rely on the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ruled Agra and Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (AMC and GMC) to defend their political interests and economic monopolies against encroachment by the state-based political parties.

Elites control lucrative real estate in the primary city of the historic urban centres of Agra, and the planned city superimposed on the *Qasba* (market-town) of Ghaziabad. The control over political power in the wealthy municipal corporations of Agra and Ghaziabad, among the wealthiest in the whole state, ensures informal rent-sharing arrangements between bureaucratic actors and political elites. The informal institutions of power craft electoral coalitions through philanthropic religious and charitable institutions funded by big business owners, the owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and Merchant Councils doubling up as Caste Associations. Caste power is therefore maintained by the influence over public office through elected politicians and networks with state-appointed civil servants. Caste power is also retained through informal institutions of economic exchange. Caste power is also maintained through cultural capital as well as social networks in the main economic centres of Agra and Ghaziabad. The confluence of political power, economic exchange and cultural capital underpins caste power in the key urban centres of North India. This has been well-documented and illustrated by Christopher Bayly, who first observed the manner in which North India's Merchant towns and regional markets consisted of *Hindu Corporate Towns* (Bayly, 1983). The intersection of caste power, economic activity and cultural capital compels low-caste regional parties to accommodate elite interests, even as the same parties have displaced conservative, elite-dominated parties from power in the provincial political theatre.

Regardless, economic change and the intensity of electoral competition between political parties is compelling political experimentation and tactical alliances between unlikely social groups and political actors. The complexity of the identity constructs of Indian electorates makes political alliances unstable and unpredictable (Manor, 2009). State governments also have relatively short time-frames in which to conceive and implement policies transferring resources towards favoured core constituencies. Economic growth across India also raises the expectations of voters in urbanised

Western Uttar Pradesh, where local people prefer to migrate to urban centres rather than rely on low-paying agrarian jobs. Consequently, secular changes in India's urban and peri-urban political economy compel political experimentation and hitherto unlikely electoral coalitions which serve to provide political elites and affluent economic actors with the ability to control state-directed, rent-generating economic activities.

The BSP's winning electoral coalitions in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region demonstrate this. The party's multi-ethnic electoral coalition is underpinned by pro-business regimes, which rely on formal and informal arrangements between the party's public officials and commercial elites. The BSP relied on its pro-business regime in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region in order to gain control of rent-generating activities and devise rent-sharing arrangements with the traditional elites of the city. It also constructed an intermediate regime which constructed multi-caste political institutions which facilitated the party's urban development agenda in the Ghaziabad and National Capital Region agglomeration.

Economic elites provided much needed capital investment in return for favourable deals from the state government, which provided political stability, land, utilities and peaceful labour relations through coordinated, top-down arrangements with senior officials deployed by the state government. The massive increase in corporate investments in infrastructure, real estate and the corporate service economy was only possible through the close collaboration of managerial elites and the co-operation of intermediate business elites. The collaboration between public officials and intermediate elites also served the state government's agenda of facilitating Dalit-Bahujan migration to the city.

The party's dual-track strategy, which used the provincial apparatus to fund pro-business and allied commercial elites as well as the urban poor and new migrants to the city, relied on the crucial social networks controlled by Managerial Elites in the state bureaucracy who coordinated public investment projects and Public Private Partnerships. The BSP state government was equally reliant on intermediate commercial elites, especially from the Gurjar community, to actually implement public investment and PPPs.

The Gurjar community, in particular, possess access to the social networks amongst wealthy landowners, credit markets, and controls the supply chains necessary in the implementation of large-scale infrastructure, real estate, and construction industry. By accommodating Gurjar political entrepreneurs within the party, the BSP was able to gain access to the local bureaucracy and to land and commodities markets from which Dalits remain excluded. In order to fulfil the state government's

obligations to high-end realtors, and prestigious corporate groups, the state government relied on major Gurjar political entrepreneurs to ensure the rapid implementation of land acquisition and construction with relatively little conflict. Gurjar patrons also provided the BSP with the ability to gain access to inexpensive land parcels which were made available for the construction of low-income neighbourhoods.

The 210 new affordable housing colonies, provided housing security for working-class Dalit-Bahujan migrants, ensured the BSP's candidates comfortable electoral victory across seven constituencies in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region (NCR). The multi-caste political regime in this urban agglomeration relied on reciprocal arrangements with economic elites and public officials who passed sufficient share of monopoly rents onto an acquiescent electorate. The BSP's tally of seven seats in the National Capital Region represent almost one-tenth of the total assembly constituencies won by the BSP in Uttar Pradesh state.

The BSP also won seven seats in the Agra agglomeration. In this city the party retains the characteristics of an ethnic party (Chandra, 2004; Guha, 2011). The party is controlled by Jatav elites but remains reliant on the electoral support and institutional networks supported by middle-class and working-class Jatav voters. In this context, where the party's office bearers, activists, volunteer cadre, and voters are primarily Jatavs. However, the BSP has also engaged in state-directed, pro-business interventions which provide social transfers to the party's working-class core constituency. It has sought to cultivate patronage and programmatic linkages between affluent Jatav elites and the non-elite majority, who are increasingly divided along class lines.

The BSP government and Jatav commercial elites in the city institutionalised philanthropic and political networks controlled by Jatav elites. These has helped establish durable, collaborative arrangements between Jatavs in the urban local bureaucracy and the community's own commercial networks controlled by leather manufacturers and exporters. Inherited inequalities of access to power and wealth are reproduced in patterns of urban settlement. Despite subaltern political assertion, the devolution of powers to the city level has empowered urban elites, who possess the material resources and social networks to most effectively engage in local politics (Tawa Lama-Rewal 2007; Harriss, 2006). Even in the contemporary period, social and kinship relationships and connections underpin economic activity in the market place. The political economy of these towns are based traditional means of economic exchange. Credit and financing of trade and manufacture depended on trade guilds, local connections and trust. The same caste and kinship networks also provide the social networks and material resources required for political agency.

The BSP deployed an authoritarian, centralised bureaucracy to gain control over the political economy in both cities. This enabled the state government to displace established power networks of commercial elites embedded within the local state. These power networks are reciprocal, institutionalised arrangements between commercial elites, political intermediaries and bureaucrats. The power networks provide information on public projects. They also aid business groups with taxes and government licenses and permits. The BSP government disrupted localised power networks by enforcing the bureaucratic hierarchy controlled by senior officials appointed by the state government. At the same time, the BSP deployed its own power networks governed by bureaucrats.

The traditional elites of the two Hindu Corporate Towns experienced the BSP government as a profoundly alienating force. The BSP deployed an elite bureaucratic cadre to co-ordinate public-private partnerships which transferred economic resources favoured constituencies. These social facts describe the political economy of both Agra and Ghaziabad. The deployment of a state-controlled police force and a bureaucratic elite also altered the balance of power between elite and subaltern communities. Elite groups could no longer deploy informal connections with the local bureaucracy to exert caste power through privileged access to inside information, rent-seeking and impunity from prosecution.

The Jatav community, forms the core vote for the Bahujan Samaj Party, and has achieved the status of an intermediate elite community in Agra. This derives from the community's symbiotic relationship with the city's historic lucrative leather manufacturing industry. This provides the BSP with a class of patrons, and pre-existing power networks with which it can exert power and influence in the local bureaucracy. The BSP state government implemented pro-business policies in order to expand the material bases of the Jatav elite political power. These were particularly concentrated around public-private partnerships in the city's leather industry, real estate and the electricity distribution network. The BSP government also relied on the strategic location of Jatav economic actors and senior bureaucrats to ensure the successful implementation of affordable housing and integrated neighbourhood development policies in the city. Data confirms previous scholarship that the BSP state government recorded "very impressive" gains in proving housing security (Pai, 2009, 1).

In Ghaziabad, and the National Capital Region, the BSP had to respond to a political economy where traditional elites and affluent landowning castes wielded the greatest influence over political power and economic activity. The BSP successfully incorporated patrons from upper-caste and intermediate elites through the institution of expansive public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure and real

estate, as well as extensive pro-corporate interventions in the political economy of National Capital Region. The BSP achieved considerable success in the rapid implementation of these pro-business projects through its ability to accommodate traditional elites and intermediate elites into its pro-business regime.

In particular, intermediate elites from the Gurjar community played a vital role in the implementation of pro-business policies. The strategic location of Gurjar economic actors as real estate brokers, industrial developers, builders' merchants and suppliers to implement PPPs. In return for contracts and tenders provided through preferential access to the BSP controlled state bureaucracy, Gurjar elites were expected to transfer a portion of their profits to Jatav sub-contractors and skilled workmen. The BSP state government also relied on Gurjar intermediate elites, with significant influence over the control of land and real estate, to provide land and facilitate the construction of affordable housing colonies for Dalit-Bahujan migrants into Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region. The role of Gurjar intermediate elites in the construction of an intermediate regime directly parallels the intermediate regime formed by Jatav bureaucrats, political activists and businesspeople in Agra. In both cities, intermediate regimes crafted multi-ethnic coalitions of political elites, commercial actors and the senior officials in the federal and urban bureaucracy.

Under the BSP, the state bureaucracy is a particularly important political constituency for the party. Strongmen in the party are not part of the core constituency of the party in a way that strongmen politicians are. Strongmen politicians are usually not Dalits and are accommodated into the structures of the party on a tactical and strategic basis. The Dalit bureaucracy and Dalit counter-culture are far more firmly embedded in the movement. Consequently, the proper functioning of state institutions is an important means of ensuring the balance of power between the political strongmen and the core Dalit constituency of the party. Empowering the bureaucracy, therefore, involves empowering a core constituency within the political grouping that forms the BSP. The SP, on the other hand, seeks to disempower the bureaucracy in order to empower local power networks.

Consequently, when it comes to law and order, the BSP has a better record at ensuring state capacity as compared to the SP. This reflects the electoral interest as well as the political ideology of the party. This social fact is tragically illustrated by the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013, where 50 people were killed and nearly 50,000 people were rendered homeless (Mishra, 2013, 1). There was deliberate targeting of Muslim homes and businesses, whilst the SP government appeared unable to control the violence. The BSP state government, on the other hand, was able to ensure a riot-free administration, something even opponents of the Dalit party have observed. The SP government, which defeated the

BSP in 2012, has been unable to prevent violent incidents since it assumed office. Muslims have been disproportionately targeted in these incidents. The irony of this situation is that the Samajwadi Party depends on a bedrock of Muslim electoral support to remain in government. Yet it appears unable to protect the lives and livelihoods of this crucial political constituency. Police reports indicate that 39 violent incidents occurred between March 2012, when Akhilesh Yadav took office and August 2013 (Rai, 2013, 1). These figures do not include casualties from the Saharanpur riots which occurred in the summer of 2014. The BSP, on the other hand, remains relatively unsuccessful in obtaining Muslim votes despite being more successful in preventing anti-Muslim violence.²⁵⁸ Whether Muslim voters change their perceptions of the Dalit party in the run up to the 2017 state assembly elections remains to be seen.

Under the BSP's authoritarian tenure, the whole process of power was dominated from Lucknow. The administration worked hard to incapacitate alternative centres of power. This disrupted the relations of reciprocity and exchange between local elites and the state. This has had important implications for the nature of state-business ties. The BSP carried a number of significant pro-business interventions in the local political economies of Agra and Ghaziabad. The proactive promotion of the real-estate industry on the basis of the construction of Yamuna Expressway is an important example in Ghaziabad. The privatisation of electricity distribution in Agra is another example. In both instances, the state's active promotion of the corporate economy greatly undermined established elites operating through informal networks of arbitrage in the local economy. This created favourable conditions for the BSP's own political agenda.

The state interventions carried out by the BSP have enabled it to create and expand its own power and patronage networks. The economic growth generated by these pro-business policies were also used to transfer resources to favoured constituencies. In Ghaziabad, the BSP was able to create an electoral alliance that was heterogeneous. This was because pro-business policies, implemented by contractors from the local commercial elite and landed, dominant castes provided the resources and jobs for the party's core, the Dalit, as well as for the cities' more affluent communities at the same time. Consequently, the antagonism caused by competition over scarce resources and access to the state was reduced because of the expanded resource base provided by economic expansion. Similarly, in Agra, the state government interventions in the real-estate and leather industries served to provide resources and access that enabled the Jatav community to advance in the local political economy.

²⁵⁸ Madhavi Devasher of Yale University surveyed Muslim voters in 45 constituencies in 2012. Her data indicates that over 54% of Muslims voted for the Samajwadi Party, whereas only 20% voted for the Bahujan Samaj Party.

In both cities, many of the BSP's initiatives were stalled before reaching complete fruition because of the party's defeat in the state elections. The incoming Samajwadi Party government reversed many of the policies as it preferred to transfer resources towards its own patronage networks. There are also significant differences in the manner in which the two parties managed the state bureaucracy. The BSP coordinated commercial activity through a powerful, centralised bureaucratic structure. This enabled tight control by the party leadership as well as the speedy implementation of the state government's pro-business policies. This also served to erode the power of the informal economy of tradition elites and replace it with favoured contractors allied to the BSP.

The BSP government's interventions have also resulted in lasting progress for its allies who were able to entrench themselves through active involvement in the real-estate industry. This allowed the BSP's favoured brokers to deploy their contacts and resources to maintain a presence in the local political economies of Agra and Ghaziabad even after the party lost power in the 2012 state elections. It appears that the promotion of corporate economy and the state-abetted inflow of capital from non-local sources helped consolidate the position of the marginalised Dalit community within the local political economy.

The BSP made tactical alliances with upwardly mobile but ritually disadvantaged businessmen who were able to provide the BSP the chance to remain electorally viable in urban politics. Access to major urban centres are extremely important for a political party because it provides resources and social networks that can provide finance, but also the political space for mobilisation. The close nexus between business, government officials and political actors is based on the nature of reciprocal exchange. The maintenance of these political communities based on factional loyalties to a factional head is fraught with many challenges. Opportunistic political leaders can always be enticed to defect from their political bosses under the right conditions.

Political leaders must ensure that the loyalty of these leaders can be assured through the judicious flow of benefits downwards to these junior leaders in terms of cash payments, preferential access and political posts. They must ensure that these leaders compete for favours from the senior leadership, and demonstrate their ability to deliver resources, deference and votes. The ability of political leaders to rally followers and ensure the smooth functioning of the parties' get-out-the-vote operations is what ensures their political survival. The Gurjar community, farmers, sold their land and moved into the real-estate and light transport business. Other members of the community become labour contractors, supplying labour to construction companies and factory units in the city. Under BSP rule, local politicians did not have the power to disrupt work or bully officials.

This promoted the expansion of the construction business that advanced the interests of large-scale real-estate developers. At the same time, it brought considerable prosperity to the Gurjar community of Ghaziabad. The BSP's policy of extensive Public Private Partnerships and the outsourcing of government contracts provided lucrative commercial opportunities to real estate developers from the Gurjar community in particular. Given the control of state power, the BSP was able to leverage these benefits as conditional on their ability to provide votes from the Gurjar community while also providing resources to important constituencies of the BSP. This involved developing close connections with pro-BSP bureaucrats in important local offices that would help provide information, award tenders and planning permissions. The pro-business environment under the BSP, also enabled the real estate industry to thrive. The real estate industry has been particularly important for the Gurjar community, as it has enabled sections of this pastoral community to thrive in the modern economy, especially as wealthy Gurjars provide patronage to poorer members of their community. In return for the benefits of aligning with the BSP, the Gurjar political leaders and contractors in the party were expected to provide employment and sub-contracts to the Jatav community.²⁵⁹ It remains a party with a difference in that sense.

The BSP did not stop rent-seeking. However, the party needed to establish the credibility of the state. This was an absolute must for the party seeking to craft a coalition of diverse communities. In particular, the BSP attracted support from urban communities, particularly the urban poor. Consequently, it required the state's functionaries to act in accordance with constitutional norms, in order to maintain support with the constituencies who voted the party in power.

The BSP's use of a centralised state, based around transferring power to an empowered technocratic bureaucracy reflects a keen understanding of the importance of an *esprit de corps* among the managerial elite. As Francis Fukuyama observes, "even well-designed institutions will fail to function properly if the officials and political leaders at the top of judicial hierarchies themselves lack the proper norms of personal behaviour" (Fukuyama, 2001, 9).

The BSP's bureaucratic cadre therefore performed the dual function of a vested interest and a politically transformative vanguard. The bureaucratic elite was the most capable formation able to challenge the informal order of the powerful in urban Uttar Pradesh.

Sectional interests based on groups are the most crucial sources of political agency. These groups are shaped by and respond to macro-processes in unpredictable ways. Individuals must use social ties in

²⁵⁹ Interview with Dushyant Nagar, Head Office, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad. 1st September, 2013.

an Indian context, particularly because the machinery of the state is organised on principles of loyalty, networks of trust and reciprocal exchange. These networks are far-reaching and extensive and they reach all the way down and all the way up. Political parties will develop a loyal cadre among the bureaucracy and in this way the creation of political community helps mitigate caste and class tension. These networks are associated within a given territory and are only salient, effective and operative within a region and a particular jurisdiction.

Political parties require these business people because they provide independent resources for politicians and they are then chosen as candidates by state elites as they can support their own election campaigns while also providing a steady flow of resources upwards to the political leadership. The BSP has had to make tactical alliances with upwardly mobile but historically disadvantaged businessmen who are able to provide the BSP the chance to remain electorally viable in urban politics. Access to major urban centres are extremely important for a political party because it provides resources and social networks that can provide finance, but also the political space for mobilisation. The close nexus between business, government officials and political actors is based on the nature of reciprocal exchange.

Informal networks are used to subvert claims and prevent implementation of policies conceived in distant state capitals. This happens, for instance, through misreporting and providing inaccurate information on facts or figures. This would then ensure that land would not be available for use as the municipal officials saw fit to use urban land in other ways than for the construction of social housing. The BSP stifled the municipal government process to overcome or stifle power centre that operates in a distinct sphere of political activity.

The BSP's core constituency, the Dalits, are poorly placed in local power hierarchies as they are historically excluded from these informal social networks of urban elites and locally dominant agrarian castes. However, the BSP was effective in nurturing and developing a core urban constituency through its core support base among the SC bureaucracy as well as skilled and competent bureaucrats from all castes. The BSP was rather successful gaining control over urban real estate which used to hand over to developers and also to the urban poor particularly recent Dalit migrants to the city. At the city level, there are different political communities who use caste-based networks to facilitate economic exchange and also rely on bureaucratic networks organised with caste-fellows. Different parties patronise networks for different communities reflecting differences in social composition among political parties. In Ghaziabad, the Dalit community is not wealthy enough to

access the senior most levels of patronage. The lucrative urban real-estate markets remain in the hands of established business communities and upwardly mobile intermediate castes.

The BSP used its time in power to cultivate a patronage network amongst the city's Brahmin, Punjabi, Bania and Tyagi business community. These are the city-wide patrons who along with Gurjars from peri-urban Ghaziabad form the foremost patrons working on behalf of the BSP in this urban area. The Jatav councillors and ward leaders operate under them, as sub-contractors, and clients. Real estate provides a glue, the monetary bonds, that cement cross-caste (as well as class, given their considerable overlap) networks. These are well-entrenched in Ghaziabad after five years of BSP rule that coincided with the highest ever growth rates for the Indian economy. However, these networks run parallel and compete with the networks that are located in the Municipal Corporation. The municipal power networks of real estate and patronage are controlled by the BJP, and the traditional urban elites. The BSP draws democratic and ideological legitimacy solely from Dalits/MBCs. Upper castes, Muslims, and dominant OBCs have little enthusiasm for the BSP's Dalit-Bahujan ideological platform. However, the BSP has been able to draw together members of local commercial classes and dominant landed communities through skilful tactical alliances centred on the provision of patronage.

Caste politics is bound up by occupational structure and the guild-like structure of caste-relations. As the urbanisation of economic activity expands, these networks of kinship also adapt to changing circumstances that are determined by cultural values as well as material self-interest. For instance, political leaders from landed communities have shifted away from demanding correctives to urban bias and policies favouring the interests of cultivators. Instead there is much greater emphasis on representing the interests of farmers in terms of receiving better compensation from the state government and the real-estate industry. The class power of local elites intersects with caste identity. Caste-based politics provides an unequal associative capacity to advance material and secular interests for richer and poorer castes.

The material basis of political power and the clientelistic networks of brokerage mesh together through the informal economy of access. The politics of resources is enmeshed together with cronyism and clientelism. The bureaucracy works through personalised networks with local and supra-local elites. The city centres in both Agra and Ghaziabad remain controlled by local networks with durable social ties. There are common meeting places for these elite sections of society. The notables who mediate on behalf of local businessmen and journalists who are embedded in local structures of power. The professional mediators play a vital role in command, control of resources which flows down from central and state government distributed grants. As the gatekeeper to urban

land, it is responsible for access to the most basic resources that provide welfare payments to the urban poor, and larger resources used for infrastructure at the local level. It also carries out very important surveys of business and properties relating to the registration and implementation of property. This provides the municipality with important allocative power.

Consequently, state-led interventions into the local political economy may be viewed as threats that are resisted by local interest groups who are unwilling to surrender local networks of reciprocal exchange. The Taj Corridor project laid out by the BSP government would have established a clientelistic structure between the BSP leadership and local business, while also generating employment for the Jatav and Muslims artisans around the Taj tourist industry. However, the local bureaucracy and urban local elite worked together to find the illegalities that prevented the project from being completed. This was a means of stifling an upcoming opponent that would have secured access to some of the most prime real estate in Agra.

The project failed as the minority BSP government was not in position to force the issue. On a similar vein, when in power for five years between 2007 and 2012, the BSP state government repeatedly clashed with urban local bodies. This conflict came across as competition for the control over territory and the ability to shape and re-shape urban real estate. This is not necessarily a one-sided fight because the lower bureaucracy, local business and the locally elected politicians form close-knit networks that able to put up considerable resistance to policies implemented from the state government. These networks are long-standing ones that can be very hard to remove in their entirety also because the bulk of the lower bureaucracy is deployed from the provincial civil service. Consequently, the networks of influence (*sifarish*) and reciprocity based on connections continue to operate. However, state governments operating through the urban Development Authorities were able to effect considerable control over the steering of the urban local polity.

The city is a field of power and the neighbourhood is a sub-field. Cities, especially intermediate ones are embedded in the political economy of the large urban area, whose geographical boundaries are shifting as Indian cities are expanding outwards into the surrounding countryside. In the process the process of urban development includes a diverse assemblage of actors into its fold. Economic resources are important for political agency, even if there is not a clear correlation between the two because numbers are also critically important in a democracy.

In particular, the BSP worked hard to centralise power away from the Municipal Corporation and into the hands of the Agra and Ghaziabad Development Authorities. The urban Development Authorities

rates among the most powerful and important agencies of urban government in any Indian city. They are responsible for the development of real estate and construction of new developments, which they then hand over the Municipal Corporation for maintenance. Over the past 15 years these bodies have shifted in their role away from construction and towards brokerage. They facilitate real-estate projects undertaken by private companies. In Agra, the empowerment of the Jatav community has reached such a level that ADA even provided funds for the Bhimnagari function in a manner that enabled local Jatav notables to steer funds towards their neighbourhoods and garner new resources.

The Development Authority was also used to overcome the resistance of local politicians to schemes by the BSP state government to hand over land to slum-dwellers. Municipal resistance to this project appears to have been overcome through the careful use of the development authority that bypassed and undercut the authority of the municipal corporation. The urban institutional architecture of government can be easily deployed in an authoritarian fashion to push through their political agendas.

The BSP sought to push for an even greater reduction of powers at the level by removing power held by the elected mayor and handing them over to the District Magistrate, and the Municipal Commissioner. Through the capture of instruments of state power, the state government is able to push through its own agendas effectively. These have provided a considerable degree of change to urban political economies of Ghaziabad and Agra. The BSP government was then able to carry a massive economic transformation of Western Uttar Pradesh. The state government invested considerable resources in the region, particularly in the National Capital Region around Delhi, but also beyond reach all the way across to Agra. Urban regimes are constituted of institutionalised arrangements of urban government. Rival political formations are locked in intense competition to gain control over these arrangements even as they are subject to a sophisticated electorate. Consequently, traditional elite power networks centred on urban local government are challenged by new entrants from historically marginalised communities.

The ability of subaltern groups to access power in the two urban contexts depends on their ability to capture power through provincial government and then use the provincial state apparatus in order to subvert the entrenched networks of established urban elites. These formations are dynamic and subject to economic change which undermines traditional patterns of deference and stresses occupational and class loyalties rather than ascriptive identities. The survival of these political opportunity structure depends on the ability of political entrepreneurs to respond to these changes. The BSP succeeded in gaining control of the offices of the state in both cities and instituted its institutional arrangements. The institution of strategic partnerships between the BSP state

government, the state bureaucracy and commercial actors delivered electoral victories in both Agra and Ghaziabad.

Nonetheless, in the medium to long-term prospects of the BSP's newly established power networks remain subject to the waxing and waning fortunes of the BSP in state-wide politics. The 2017 provincial elections are the crucial test of the BSP's political future. Whether the BSP is able to secure state-wide power depends on the party's ability to forge coalitions and make successful alliances with non-elite social groups, including UP's numerous Muslim and upper-caste voters, while also retaining the loyalty of its traditional Dalit-Bahujan base. The party's success in the recent rural local body polls suggests this is possible.²⁶⁰²⁶¹ Whether the party can reverse its significant electoral decline in provincial and national elections remains to be seen.

²⁶⁰ Ali, M. "UP Panchayat Elections a boost for BSP". <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/up-panchayat-election-results-a-boost-for-bsp/article7838605.ece>. 3rd November, 2015.

²⁶¹ Singh, R. "BSP stages a comeback in UP Panchayat Polls; leaves SP Red-faced". <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/up-panchayat-polls-bsp-back-to-winning-ways-gives-bjp-and-sp-a-scare/>. 3rd November, 2015.

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Appendix

Appendix One: List of Interviewees

Political actors associated with the BSP and Dalit political activists

Malkhan Singh	Primary Education Authority. Former Vice-President Backward and Minority Central Employees Federation (BAMCEF) Agra. Writer and poet from a landowning Jatav family.
Arjun SAVEDIA	School-teacher, Guest lecturer at Agra College. BSP booth committee co-ordinator, Agra Cantonment Assembly segment
Kalpna Maurya	School-teacher and member of the BSP women's cell, Agra Cantonment Assembly Segment. From a land-owning Jatav family.
Pramod Maurya	Manufacturer and exporter with extensive business interests in Agra. Associated with the BSP and with the BJP through family connections. Related to Anjula Mahaur, a former BJP mayor of Agra.
Dushyant Maurya	Real-estate developer. Associated with Jatav commercial elites working in the leather industry.
Rajkumar	Lecturer in Politics, Dayal Singh College, New Delhi. Resident of Ghaziabad.
Master Man Singh	Former legislator Republican Party of India (RPI), pioneer architect of Dalit-Bahujan electoral coalitions in Agra.
Pandit Bhagwan Das Sharma	Small businessman and political operative. Patron and facilitator for working-class Muslims, Kushwaha and Jatavs in Sultanpura market. Associated with Gutiyari Lal Duvesh, BSP legislator from Agra Cantonment Constituency.

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Mukarram Mirza	Personal assistant to Zulfikar Bhutto, former BSP legislator from Agra Cantonment Constituency. Proprietor of a tractor dealership and landowner, Shamshabad Agra.
RK Singh	Former Zonal Co-ordinator, BSP, Etmadpur Assembly Segment.
Shailendra Singh	Owner of the Gautam Budh Guest House and Custodian of the Buddhist Monastery at Chakkipat in Agra.
Anil Rampuria	Hotel owner and leader of Nagavansh Sena, an unaffiliated Balmiki political organisation, Etmadpur Assembly Constituency.
Gavendra Kumar	Tour operator and Balmiki political leader, Agra Cantonment Assembly Constituency.
SP Chauhan	BAMCEF office-bearer and White-Collar Employee at the Agra Municipal Corporation.
Surendra Pathre	Advocate at the Agra Sessions Court and veteran BAMCEF activist.
Dharamendra Pippal	Shop-owner, BA student and booth committee member, Agra cantonment constituency
Manish Bhaironath	Shoe-maker, deputy Chairman, BSP, Dhandupura and Tajganj wards.

Political actors associated with the BJP and Hindu Nationalist Political Activism

SP Singh	BJP spokesman, Western Uttar Pradesh. Advocate and former municipal councillor, Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.
Mohan Singh Lodha	Hotel Manager and ward councillor, Dhandupura ward, Agra.
R. Vashishth	Lawyer, Agra South Assembly Segment.
Anjula Mahaur	Former mayor of Agra.

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Indrajit Balmiki (Arya)	Incumbent mayor of Agra.
Akash Vashsith	Journalist and environmental activist, Ghaziabad.
Vikrant Tongad	Environmental activist and landowner, Ghaziabad and Dadri
Rajendra Tyagi	BJP councillor and factory owner Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad.

Political Actors associated with the Samajwadi Party

Ravi Singh Yadav	Landowner, environmental activist patrician and political patron, Barauli Aheer, Agra.
Sulekha Yadav	Lawyer and President of the Braj Kranti Dal, Agra.
Bahadur Singh Yadav	Vice-President Uttar Pradesh Gram Pradhan Association, Western Uttar Pradesh Section, Agra.
Sobran Singh	Security Guard and Samajwadi Party Worker, Agra.
R. Gurjar	Property Developer, Ghaziabad.
Salman Sheikh	Small-business owner, Agra.
Raisuddin	Leather Exporter and Property Developer, Agra.
Archana Balmiki	Lawyer and Samajwadi Party candidate, Agra.
Deep Singh Yadav	Student leader Samajwadi Party, son of Samajwadi Party District Council President (Firzoabad District)Agra.
Dharmendra Singh Jatav	Property Developer, landowner and Jatav community leader, Agra
Krishna Kant Singh	Gurjar Community leader and political actor, Ghaziabad.
Mohseen Ali	Neighbourhood-level party worker and locksmith, Samajwadi Party.

Political Actors associated with the Congress

BR Joshi	Former Trade Unionist and factory owner, Agra.
Dushyant Nagar	Farmer's leader and property developer, Ghaziabad.
Santosh Rajput	Associate of Dushyant Nagar, Ghaziabad.

State Government Officials

TS Rana	Chief Information Officer, Uttar Pradesh Government, Lucknow.
Karam Vikram Srivastava	Chief Auditor, Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.
Suresh Kumar	Chief Engineer, Agra Municipal Corporation.
P Talwar	Line Manager, Housing and Urban Development Authority, Agra.
Manoj Kumar	Block Development Officer, Agra.
SK. Chauhan	Line Manager, District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), Agra.
Santosh Shukla	Estates Manager, Kanshi Ram Housing Complexes and District Urban Development Authority, Agra.
Daroga Yadav	Station House Officer, Tajganj Police Station, Agra
Shailendra Singh Chauhan	Police Seargent, Tajganj Police Station, Agra
Sobran Singh Yadav	Police Constable, Tajganj Police Station, Agra
Mukesh Kumar	Police Constable, Tajganj Police Station, Agra
Ratan Kumar Jatav	Police Constable, Tajganj Police Station, Agra.

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Rahul Yadav	Police Constable, Tajganj Police Station, Agra
Raghu Yadav	Police Constable, Tajganj Police Station, Agra.
K. S Singh	Chief Inspector, Uttar Pradesh Sales Tax and Revenue Department, Ghaziabad.
Nand Kishore Yadav	Transporter, Ghaziabad.
K. Bajaj	Chartered Surveyor, Archeological Survey of India, Agra.
Santosh Kumar	Principal, Gautam Budh College, Agra
Mahesh Kumar	Auditor, Agra Development Authority
Arjun Singh	Payroll Clerk, Agra Jal Board (Water Board)
Dharamendra Peepal	School Teacher, Shamshabad, Agra
Satish Maurya	Department of Town and Country Planning, Agra
Nandan Singh Yadav	School Teacher, Shamshabad, Agra
Shyam Kumar	Employee, Indian Postal Service, Lucknow

Businessmen

Raman Bhalla	President, Agra Foundry Owners' Association.
Advocate Kuldeep Nagar	Lawyer and Industrial Developer, Ghaziabad.
M. Oswal	Commercial Publisher, Agra
Sanjay Jain	Leather Manufacturer, Agra
Satish Yadav	Real-estate Developer, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, Agra and Ghaziabad.
Raghubir Yadav	Dairy owner, Ghaziabad.
Bunty Yadav	Freight operator and trucker, Ghaziabad.

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Nandan Singh	Publisher and Sales Executive, Ghaziabad.
Surendra Singh Bhatti	Industrial Developer, Ghaziabad.
Sanjay Gupta	Leather Wholesaler, Agra.
Sahel Khan	Leather manufacturer, Ghaziabad.
Akram Sheikh	Auto-rickshaw and Taxi operator, Agra.
M. Nasir Khan	Tourist Tax operator Agra.
Danish Khan	Engineer and machine operator, Ghaziabad.
K Paliwal	Actuary, Ghaziabad and New Delhi
Shadav Saxsena	Sales Executive, Agra.
Shyam Kumar Kushwaha	Vegetable Wholesaler, Sultanpura Agra.

Journalists and Research Scholars

Ajoy Bose	Journalist and author of <i>Behenji: A Political Biography of Mayawati</i>
RB Singh Yadav	Editor and Bureau Chief, <i>Aaj Newspaper</i> , Agra.
Devendra Sharma	PhD scholar, Ghaziabad.
Ashok Nirvan	Editor and Bureau Chief, <i>Deshbandhu Newspaper</i> , Ghaziabad.
Vinod Rajput	Reporter, <i>Hindustan Times</i> and <i>Hindustan</i> , Ghaziabad
Akash Vashist.	Freelance journalist and environmental activist, Ghaziabad.
Avinash Mishra	Research Scholar, New Delhi.

Representatives of Non-governmental organisations

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SK. Trivedi Chief Executive Officer, Manav Sewa Sansthan, Agra.

Ram Kumar Dalit Rights Activist, Vidhan Sabha Sadan, Lucknow and Sahranpur.

Trade Union Officials

BK Tiwari President, Central Industrial Trade Union (CITU), Private Sector Wing Ghaziabad.

Kshtrepal Singh Jagina Treasurer, Tourist Taxi Drivers Union, Agra.

Ajay Chauhan Secretary, Tourist Taxi Drivers Union, Agra.

Mukesh Kumar Balmki Municipal Employees Union, Ghaziabad.

Table 1. The Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections, 2012. Breakdown of Seats won and vote-share by Region, and Political. Party (Does not include the RLD, Independent or Other Political Parties)

Region	SP		BSP		BJP		INC	
	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)
West (84)	29	23.8	28	28.7	12	15.6	6	11.0
Rohilkhand (52)	29	28.9	11	22.7	8	18.9	2	10.6
Central (98)	76	34.4	9	26.0	7	13.0	4	13.2
Bundelkhand (19)	5	25.3	7	26.2	3	18.9	4	18.6
North-East (61)	32	28.1	9	22.7	10	17.7	7	12.2
South-East (89)	53	30.2	16	27.1	7	11.5	5	9.0
TOTAL (403)	224	29.2	80	25.9	47	15.0	28	11.6

Source: Ajoy Bose, 2012.

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Table 2. List of Uttar Pradesh State Legislators in the National Capital Region.

Name (Caste)	Constituency	Political Party
Mahesh Sharma	NOIDA	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Suresh Bansal	Ghaziabad	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Zakir Ali	Loni	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Amarpal Sharma	Sahibabad	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Chaudhary Wahab	Muradnagar	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Shamsher Bahadur	Dhaulana	Samajwadi Party (SP)
Satveer Singh Gurjar	Dadri	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Vedram Bhatti	Jewar	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Lokesh Dixit	Baraut	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

Source: Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation and Vikrant Tongad.

Table 3. List of Uttar Pradesh State Legislators from Agra

Name (Caste)	Constituency	Political Party
Sh.Jagan Prasad Garg	Agra North	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Sh.Yogendra Upadhyaya	Agra South	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
Sh.Gutiari Lal Duwesh	Agra Cantonment	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Dr. Dharmapal Singh	Etmadpur	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Sh.Kali Charan Suman	Agra Rural	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Sh. Suraj Pal Singh	Fatehpur Sikri	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Sh.Bhagwan Singh Kushwaha	Kheragarh	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Sh.Chotelal Verma	Fatehabad	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Rakesh Babu	Tundla	Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
Raja Aridaman Singh	Bah	Samajwadi Party (BSP)

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.

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Table 4. Civic Amenities provided to Jatavs under the Bhimnagari Scheme

Project No.	Project Type.	Amount Allocated (Indian Rupees)	Planning Permission Approval Date	Project Completion Date	Amount Expended	Contractor (Caste)
1	Shahganj Ward. Paving and Covering of Roads and Drains. (Basantlal's House to Ramchandra's House)	905,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	845,494	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
2	Shahganj Ward. Paving and Covering of Roads and Drains. (From JP Kain's House to Ch. Ajab Singh's House)	596,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	576,969	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
3	Shahganj Ward. The Construction of a Link Road and Interlocking Paving Stones. (Lal Hari Singh's house to Ghanshyam Tailor's house, Including the Ambedkar Vatika)	964,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	805,154	MP Constructions (Jatav)

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4	Shahganj Ward Construction of a Link Road and Interlocking Paving Stones. (Lal Hari Singh's house to Ghanshyam Tailor's house, Including the Ambedkar Vatika and Balmiki Basti	972,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	812,978	Shiv Kumar (Jatav)
5	Shahganj Ward Roads and Drains covered on the lane linking Vijay Singh's House with Dhirubhai's house	692,200	19-03-13	30-03-13	683,547	Dheer Enterprises (Brahmin)
6	Shahganj Ward Link Road and Drains connecting Bhoopsingh's house with Tarechand Pyare	403,000	19-03-13	30-03-13	344,220	Arora Construction (Panjabi Khatri)
	Total	4,532,200			4,068,362	

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.

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Table 5. Public works sanctioned by the Agra Municipal Corporation on the occasion of Bhimnagari/Dr Ambedkar's Birth Anniversary.

Project No.	Project Type.	Amount Allocated (Indian Rupees/USD)	Planning Permission Approval Date	Project Implementation Date	Amount Expended	Contractor (Caste)
1	Road Surfacing and Layering from House number 107 to 50 B. Shahganj Ward	642,700/9,679	09-04-13	20-04-13	565,576	Dheer Enterprises (Jatav)
2	Road Surfacing and Layering from <i>Tirahi Khati</i> Bar to the Saket Intersection	837,400/ 12,611	09-04-13	20-04-13	736,912	Dheer Enterprises (Jatav)
	Total (Rs.)	1480100			1302488	

Source: Agra Municipal Corporation.